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MACRIMMON.

A HIGHLAND TALE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

REDMOND THE REBEL, COSPATRICK OF RAYMONDSHOLM, ST.
KATHLEEN, &c.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here ;

My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer—

Chasing the deer and following the roe ;

My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go. *Gaelic Song.*

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1823.

MACRIMMON.

CHAPTER I.

But where is the iron-bound prisoner? where?

CAMPBELL.

AS the day was far advanced before the precognition concluded, it was conceived expedient to postpone, for another night, forwarding the prisoner to jail, Glen Eynort and the laird of Ben Ard, who were to superintend his incarceration, being anxious to accomplish the journey without any protracted halt. In consequence of this arrangement, Clifford was left a few hours longer under the same roof with Miss Macara; but, except in the consciousness of her

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proximity, he derived no consolation from that circumstance; no kindly visitant invaded the solitude of his prison-chamber, but a menial, the servant of Glen Eynort, brought him food at the usual hours of family-meal, and stood sentry at his door throughout the night; this man was the only person that seemed aware of his existence, and the pain inflicted by such total desertion even the sense of innate rectitude and innocence could not altogether deaden. He was too remote from that part of the castle inhabited by the family to hear those mournful sounds he naturally supposed grief would elicit, but at the dinner-hour he plainly distinguished the shrill notes of the bagpipe; he could hardly permit himself to believe that he heard aright, so little idea had he of Caethel Doun's talents being put in requisition at such a time; but as his ear caught more accurately the distant strain, his surprise decreased. Mackennachar
for

for once blew not the warlike gathering of Macrimmon; there was death in the castle, and his chieftain seated himself at table, to the wild and melancholy music of the *coronach*.

The death of Lochullin had been so instantaneously succeeded by personal misfortune, that, much as he valued him, Clifford might be said to have had no leisure for the indulgence of grief, until his own fate was in a certain measure determined by the foregoing examination; even then, selfish anxieties would intrude on those mournful meditations which had his deceased friend for their object, thereby rendering questionable to his own heart the sincerity of his sorrow.—“And yet,” said he, in an interval of mental reasoning, “it cannot altogether arise from the influence his demise has on my destiny, else wherefore was it that I held him so dear when in life, and that I deprecated his death before I knew it was to herald mine

own? It is the weakness incidental to human nature that thus perpetually drags my thoughts back to self, and compels me to look upon him as the happier of the two. He is gone down to his grave—violently, it is true—yet in honour; but I shall depart like a dog. Which then have I most cause to mourn?”

When Lillias occupied his thoughts, they were less in danger of wandering; in the extremity of her affliction she had, in accordance with that promise pledged to her dying brother, stood forward in his defence—had declared, in the face of his accusers, her conviction that he was innocent, and her determination so to aver when a still more awful epoch arrived; and while the remembrance of her having so done was left him, he felt his heart could not become entirely desolate. As he strung together in his mind the speaking proofs she had given of a kind and a noble heart,

heart, a thrill of pride blended itself with the love and gratitude he awarded as her due; depending solely on his own discrimination, he had singled her out as one whose worth he could not hope to see matched—as one who, in joy and in sorrow, would be equally true and devoted; and though they had parted for ever—though, as the punishment of having done homage to her inestimable qualities, he was to die, he could not restrain a throb of exultation that the adopted of his love had proved so deserving.

On the following morning, so soon as the first blush of dawn was seen on the eastern horizon, he was offered his morning repast, and then led forth to commence that journey, the conclusion of which was to place him in a jail. A large body of the tenantry assembled to see him depart, and threats and curses assailed him when he emerged from beneath the arch of the castle gate; it was

the first time the fierce hoot of public indignation had made him its object, and he found it a species of torture not easy to bear; he was glad that the lingering darkness sufficed to hide all exterior signs of those bitter feelings such a circumstance was calculated to give birth to, and, as far as was in his power, exerted himself to suppress them; but, for a space, nature would have way.

It had been thought requisite to have a cart in readiness for his conveyance, but when this was made known, he entreated that, if he was not permitted to travel on horseback, he might at least be allowed to walk. Glen Eynort, though it was the laird of Ben Ard whom the prisoner addressed, adduced in opposition the necessity of keeping his hands bound during the journey; but Maccorquodale, less biassed to inhumanity, eventually took his pledge that he would make no effort to escape, and let him mount a pony. This the unfortunate
was

was grateful for, inasmuch as it not only saved him from that species of corporeal torture which the jolting of an unhung vehicle inflicts, but also prevented that deep sense of degradation which arises from being treated as a convicted and obdurate criminal. Escape was farther from his thoughts than the best of his friends imagined; before freedom could be valued, he had an aspersed character to restore to its former lustre; and if this was not to be accomplished, he recked but little what befel his body.

The party whose special duty it was to act as his escort consisted of four Highlanders, independent of Glen Eynort and Ben Ard; and one of these was old Donald Darroch, who had volunteered his services, and been accepted in preference to many a more personable man. A wondering and vindictive crowd formed a long and threatening train as far as Erridale, the outlet from Glen Rimmon; and it was while in momen-

tary expectation of suffering a violent and barbarous death from the multitude, that Clifford obtained a farewell glance of their chieftain's dwelling—that mansion which, in a few short days, had witnessed the happiest and most wretched periods of his existence. The sun had not altogether cleared the eastern boundary of the valley, his level rays therefore left the bosom of the lake, and the woods fringing its banks, covered with a veil of bluish transparent mist, while the Dun, and all the loftier precipices encompassing it, glowed with the deep golden tinge of the morning beam.—Come good or ill, he felt it was a last look to him, and his glance wandered slowly over the scene, while his feelings bore close analogy to those of a dying man, who watches from a deathbed the setting of that luminary which rises for him no more. When the parting curse of the Clan Rimmon was vented—when he heard a hundred voices simultaneously

ly

ly declare, that henceforth they would hold as sinister the day that brought him to their glen, and one and all be nigh to witness his exit on the scaffold, he turned once more to look for the loch, the dun, and the old grey tower. The bald brow of Craig Horrodale, sterile and intimidating as his fortunes, alone met his eye—all that was “fair to look upon” was with the past, and Glen Rimmon seen only in the mirror of remembrance.

As Glen Eynort and Ben Ard brought up the rear, the nature of the road, and perhaps the wish to converse without restraint, sometimes separated them so far from the prisoner as to admit of his holding communication with his guards, without making them privy to its purport; this he felt nowise inclined to do during the early part of the day; but when he came to understand that his old guide, Donald Darroch, was the only one of the four that pretended to speak

English, his resolution to remain indignantly silent began to waver. The old man's countenance was as inexpressive as the face of his native precipices, yet if the frequency and steadiness with which he riveted his eyes on his prisoner might be taken as a criterion, his predominant feeling was commiseration. Clifford was on the point of addressing him, when several hems and half-uttered ejaculations proved that the Highlander was meditating a similar procedure.—

“Will hersel’ no pe speaking a kind word to Tonal’d Tarroch?” said he, at length; “she no pe fond of travelling wi’ her mou’ shut.”

“Kind words!” answered Clifford, despondingly—“think you the world uses me so well at this moment, that kind words should be forthcoming for the first who asks them?”

“She’ll no just pe saying tat,” rejoined Donald, gathering courage to proceed; “put tere pe aye some pody left forsta loneliest

loneliest and ta most wronged to pe looking to. Ta goot and ta gentle lady pefriends ta Sassenach; and, py her word! Tonal'd Tarroch thinks tat Glen Eynort pe a pig liar, and a true pird of ta tevil."

"Do you mean to say that you believe me innocent?" inquired Clifford.

"To pe sure, to be sure," replied Donald, fervently; "she pelieves tat her hand spilled not one drop of Lochullin's plood, for all ta swearing of her enemy."

"I am thankful to God that it is so," rejoined Clifford; "for, in my present deserted state, the countenance and acquittal of one honest man are much. But wherefore is it that you refuse credence to Glen Eynort's accusation?"

"Pecause hersel' pe no stranger to Glen Eynort's plack heart," answered Donald; "and pecause she would sooner pe trusting ta worst word spoken py Miss Lillias, tan Glen Eynort's oath on ta pook hersel'. Glen Eynort has peen

looking for ta lands of Lochullin, and for tat she would hang ta pest, or kill ta pest. Ta curse of ta prokenhearted might pe her portion, if she was not ta last Macrioman !”

“ He is one you had better not rail so loudly against,” said Clifford, apprehensive that the acute ear of his enemy might catch the old man’s words ; “ to those who give me credit for innocence, my misfortunes may well serve as a warning not to rouse his hatred ; he has rendered me an object of detestation to good men, and thrown a stain on my character, which a full acquittal can hardly do away.”

“ Ochone ! ochone !” returned the Highlander, mournfully, “ ta world grows worse and worse, as ta hairs of her head grow whiter, or goot men would pe seeing like old Tonal’d Tar-roch. Put, for hersel’s sake, for ta sake of her tat’s at rest, and for ta sake of ta young lady of Lochullin, she’ll set her
free,

free, or hang in ta rope peside her. She'll maype no pe seeing ta plack pack of Scour Vuillin, and ta pig woods pefore her?"

As he spoke, he pointed to a dark and lofty ridge of hills, the slopes of which were partially clothed with wood. Clifford almost smiled as he declared that he saw them distinctly; for, excepting the precipices under which they were travelling, a brawling river some hundred feet below, and the sky, there was no other object for the eye to rest upon.

"Well ten," said the Highlander, with cool resolution in his look, "she'll just pe putting ta peast to a gallop, till she comes to ta first glen leading to ta woods of Scour Vuillin; after tat, she'll pe right to pe leaping off his pack, and trusting to her feet and ta *Coil More*. Pe off now, and God pless and preserve her for petter days!"

"And what is to become of you, Donald,"

nald," inquired Clifford, "provided I follow your advice, and effect my escape?"

"Hersel' will just pe staying pehind for a little, to make up matters wi' Glen Eynort, py her leave, and maype lend ta gillies a skelp, should ta pe for passing her," answered Donald. "Now ride! ride! and, as she said pefore, God's plessing pe wi' ta Sassenach!"

"No, no, Donald," rejoined Clifford; "if I regain my liberty, it shall not be by sacrificing you, and skulking among the pines and birches of the Coil More. I am grieved to think I have no better mode of testifying my gratitude for your devotion than by a few feeble words, but hereafter, in your own heart, will you find reward for your kindness to an unfortunate fellow-creature. But let us ride apart, for I can perceive the wolf is on the watch."

"And would pe worrying her, if she tared," added Donald, as the stern voice of

of

of Glen Eynort ordered him to resign his place next the prisoner to a less garrulous guard. He had no alternative but obedience, and care was taken that no further opportunity of conversing should be allowed, for he who had the superintendence of their march knew well that he had long before forfeited all claim on Donald's fidelity.

Notwithstanding they had started with the dawn, and travelled throughout the day with unusual rapidity, evening was drawing on, when, from a distant height, the town of —— was descried, and hailed as the conclusion of their journey. As they descended from the uplands, whose boundary they had at length attained, a wide and magnificent prospect lay spread before them, permitting the eye to embrace, at one glance, spacious estuaries, fertile peninsulas, and various towns and hamlets, on the white walls of which the rays of the departing sun left a lingering flush of glory. Clifford
had

had beheld before this far-stretching and entrancing landscape, but then his spirit was unbroken, and his natural sensibility to the charms of nature heightened by the tranquillity and well-regulated hopes of his heart ; since then, tranquillity had suffered utter wreck, and of his hopes there scarcely remained a relic to cheer him onward. This sudden reverse fully explained the reason why the verdure of the earth, the blue waves of the ocean, the glowing sky of heaven itself, all darkened and grew black as he looked upon them. He watched the sun go down beyond the western heights, and he might be said to see it sink, as though he should never more behold it rise ; it seemed to have set in the last night of the world, and to leave the vast landscape before him devoid of form or beauty.

Throughout the day Glen Eynort had kept aloof from his prisoner, as if averse to communing with him ; but when the
journey

journey drew near a close, he could not resist the fiendish impulse that goaded him on to mark their separation with insult. Intimating to the laird of Ben Ard his desire to exchange a few words in private with the victim of his enmity, he spurred forward, and ordering the attendants to fall back, took their place. —“ I give my fellow-traveller joy,” said he, with that sneering smile which, for the last two days, had deserted his face —“ the conclusion of our journey and the jail of — are near.”

Clifford remained silent, for he surmised that insults he had no means of punishing were in reserve. Glen Ey-nort, however, was not in a mood to be easily foiled, for, after a short pause, he added —“ What ! tongue-tied at the outset ! Fie ! fie ! this will never bring you off a conqueror. Cheer up, my good sir, and if you turn out at all conversible, I reckon if I beguile the remaining half-mile before us, in such a way as shall speedily

speedily earn your warmest thanks. I would talk of Dunrimmon, and of Lillias Macara, my knight of the woful countenance."

"The name of either ought to speak consternation to your soul," returned Clifford, unable to maintain his taciturnity.

"Or burn my lips in giving them utterance," rejoined the other. "Well, well; be it as you will. Yet, on the whole, Mr. Clifford, do you not look upon me as a deserving and a happy man?"

"*You* as deserving! *you* as happy!" exclaimed Clifford—"No, no; I hourly thank my God that I know no such deserts—no such happiness. Blasted though fame and fortune be—though life itself hangs but on man's fickle breath, I would not exchange destinies for all that is Glen Eynort's."

"Well," returned his companion, "I am not yet so satiated with character
and

and security as to insist on your taking them off my hands, and accepting in lieu dishonour and a rope. Yet, in case you come to suspect that I am given to tell fibs, I will go so far as to waste a few words in proving myself both deserving and happy. In the first place, have I not displayed the address of a perfect Machiavel, in circumventing a treacherous and designing enemy? have I not waited patiently—watched patiently—suffered patiently? and have I not hurled him to the brink of perdition in the end? Answer me honestly; are talents such as these unworthy of admiration—undeserving of reward?”

“Then take both from those inclined to grant them,” replied Clifford; “for me, I hold you in mortal despite and detestation.”

“So that flashing eye avows,” retorted Glen Eynort; “and had not the law stretched out her relentless fangs, I presume we should have drawn a trigger together

together in a friendly way, or mayhap taken a morning tilt with the small-sword, merely to give us an appetite for breakfast. But now that I have done justice to my veracity as far as regards my claiming high deserts, let me proceed to the second clause, and shew that I am equally worthy of envy as of admiration. I have noticed that you are not altogether insensible to the charms of Miss Macara—of course, her having unexpectedly become heiress to her brother's estates only renders them the more dazzling, and lessens that natural antipathy to the trammels of wedlock which I, in common with other men, I presume, ever feel inclined to entertain. Now acknowledge that, with cousin Lillias for a lady, and Lochullin as her dowry in perspective, I am justly entitled to the appellation of 'happy man.'

"You are entitled to the appellation of *fiend*," observed Clifford, while he surveyed him with the steady eye of innocence.

nocence. “But speak on; I heed you not.”

“Now that is spoken like a thankless varlet,” returned Glen Eynort, somewhat abashed; “but no matter—ingratitude is so common a vice now-a-days; as to engender no surprise; so to my subject. As well as a heart like mine can love womankind, do I love the saint-like eyes and sighing voice of Lillias Macara; but far better than either do I love the broad acres she now inherits. One short year over, and Dun Rimmon shall see such a wedding as never Highlander yet shook heel at; the brown-haired beauty of the North shall be the bride, and I, Ninian Macrimmon, of Glen Eynort, the man to whom she is mated.”

“On that day the waters of Loch Ruart will surely rise to engulf you,” exclaimed Clifford, every nerve thrilling with passion. “But no!—such a monstrous union never can take place; villain

lain though you be, in the blackest sense of the word, marrying the sister of Lochullin is an acme of guilt you have not hardihood to aspire to!"

"Doubt me not," retorted Glen Eynort; "though a spectre from the tomb stood between to forbid it, Lillias should be mine; on my breast alone shall those glossy ringlets repose—in my ear, and no other, shall that gentle voice breathe words of affection."

"Liar!" shouted Clifford, exasperated beyond endurance, and lifting his hand to strike the boaster to the earth, "I will dash that haughty front beneath my horse's hoofs!"

"Take heed what you venture to attempt," returned Glen Eynort, coolly, while he laid his hand on the stock of a pistol that peeped from below his *brachan*; "one hostile motion sees a bullet lay your own head as low as you idly threaten to bring mine. I was bent on lightsome talk, but since you so incline, shall

shall now resort to a sterner mode of speech. Driveller that you are! thought you that Ninian Macrimmon would tamely submit to see her he had marked for himself won by an English boy? thought you that the fairest blossom of our mountains sprung for no better purpose than to be plucked by, and worn on the helmet of a southern soldier? By my name! I take pride in telling you, we admit of no such spoliation. I marked that presumptuous eye—I read that deceptious heart; but I kept my secret like that of the grave, and marked, planned, accomplished all, without assistance. True, I never dared to hope that my revenge was to turn out so complete; but a bow drawn at a venture slew a king of Israel, and so may the erring stone which smote Lochullin be said to send you to the shades below.”

“And think you to escape all slur in this matter?” inquired Clifford. “Before my judges I will declare that you, and
you

you alone, are guilty of your kinsman's blood."

"You may as well sing an old song when asked for your defence," observed Glen Eynort. "Who the deuce will give heed to a culprit denouncing the most material witness for the prosecution? believe me, no one to whom nature has granted common judgment. A miracle alone can save you, and that is the resurrection of Fasnacloich and Alister Chisholm. The devil did me a glorious act of kindness when he gave them to the fish of Loch Ruart."

"But Miss Macara will not desert me," returned Clifford; "her evidence and denunciation will be credited, and may work your overthrow."

"She can do me no harm, but herself much," was the rejoinder. "What does her evidence tend to, farther than to prove that a dying man, in a moment of delirium, pronounced you innocent, and immediately after retracted his assertion?"

sertion? Who, when it is published that you were her lover, will doubt her perjury, or fail to infer that a hardened heart has leagued her with the murderer of her brother? But, on the whole, I am inclined to believe that she will speedily revoke every word she had alleged in your favour, and if she does bear witness at all, bear it against you. I prophecy that, ere long, I shall have so thoroughly rectified her opinions on this head, that she will be able to read your last dying speech without a tear."

"I shall treasure up your words for future exigency," said Clifford, writhing under the mental torture his merciless foe inflicted.

"Do so," was the sneering remark; "but keep it also in view, that we have had no auditors, and that what you assert I can deny. Yet, in case I should farther commit myself, let the subject go to sleep, more especially as I perceive

we are close on the suburbs of the borough."

They entered the town in silence, and as it was that period of the evening when twilight struggles vainly with the increasing gloom, Clifford hoped he might reach his melancholy destination unnoticed; but in this he was disappointed; his guards were soon recognized by acquaintances, the occasion of their journey inquired into, narrated, and in consequence rapidly promulgated. It was perhaps well for the prisoner that the foregoing conversation had so agitated his mind, as in a measure to render him callous to the loud and repeated expressions of popular indignation that saluted him from all sides, otherwise he could hardly have supported himself during the half-hour he was detained in front of the tolbooth, owing to some delay arising from the lateness of the hour. At length all preliminaries for his reception

tion were adjusted; the heavy doors fell back and admitted him—the hootings of the multitude sounded fainter and fainter on his ear—bolts and chains rattled at intervals, as he continued to follow his guide. He entered a dark, comfortless, solitary room; a clammy hand grasped his fingers, and a friendly voice breathed forth—“God save ta Sassenach!” The ensuing moment Donald was gone, and he sunk down on the straw pallet of a felon.

The diary of a man condemned to the solitude of a prison must needs have little variety of incident. Clifford soon discovered that he was the only inhabitant of the building, for crimes are rare in these remote districts; and in this circumstance he found a source of consolation, inasmuch as it left him free from observation, and in all probability saved him from herding with the corrupt and vicious. For the first day he made no exertion to recall his scattered

thoughts, but continued stretched on his miserable couch, in a sort of listlessness and stupor—alive, but scarcely conscious of existence. The jailor regularly brought him coarse food, and occasionally let fall a few words of condolence; but for a time he left the food untouched, nor deigned to return an answer; the other consequently grew equally taciturn.—But another sun arose, and as its beams streamed through the grated window of his apartment, he approached it, in order to try if the bland air of morning would dissipate the suffocating oppression at his heart.—“ Let me bear my misfortunes like a man,” he ejaculated, at length finding utterance; “ and the less I appear to suffer, the less shall that monster Glen Eynort triumph. Let me endeavour to arrange my thoughts, so as to make every effort to circumvent and expose his machinations; and if I fail, be it with words of bitter defiance, not of lamentation, on my lips. If it is
my

my doom to be cut off with ignominy from the earth—if my sun must go down in shame and dishonour, be it so; I trust the actions of my short life have not been so systematically iniquitous as to shut me out from mercy in another. As for my name—that now blighted name I hoped one day to render so glorious, a few fleeting years will suffice to consign it to oblivion as total as though I had never existed. Lillias too will forget—but no, I must not think of her; God send her brighter days than I dare to anticipate for her! The bride of Glen Eynort!—sooner, sooner may she join Lochullin in the tomb!”

From that moment his fortitude began to return—at least despondency was not permitted to break down his mind into imbecility; he procured writing materials, and wrote a long explanatory letter to his friend Tarleton, enclosing one for his colonel, tendering the resignation of his commission, provided the

latter thought it requisite. He found this a painful duty, as, should he be acquitted, it left him in a certain measure destitute; but there was no alternative; he could only hope that colonel Wriothesley would not withdraw his countenance and good opinion at such a crisis, but that, backed by the entreaties of Tarleton, a hitherto-untarnished character would be the means of retaining for him a future provision, should the workings of malice eventually fail. These letters dispatched through the agency of the jailor, he set himself to calculate when he might expect Tarleton to make his appearance; for, judging by his own heart, he doubted not but he would hasten to offer consolation and advice, the moment he became aware of his unhappy case. His spirits began to droop, when a whole day, over and above the period necessary for the conveyance of the letter and his friend's subsequent journey, elapsed without any intelligence

gence of him—"He might at least have written a few words," said he, mentally; "but Tarleton is like the rest of the world, and leaves me to founder alone. Well, well, many a gallant vessel has gone down unsuccoured before now; so I will vex myself with mankind no more. Not even to Coulson will I write; let him learn from the public prints that I have died the death, or bear the brand of a malefactor; and then, in his ignorance, muse over the circumstance, with cold-hearted amazement at his ever having given a murderer credit for aught bearing a similitude to virtue. A few weeks hence, and how quiet and forgotten may I be lying! In my boyhood—in those hours of deep and abstruse thought which agreed not with my years, and probably foretold that my destiny was not to be happy, I have marvelled on what spot on the face of the earth I was to lay this head on its final pillow, and leave these

limbs to moulder ; pestilential climes, battle fields, the broad bosom of the pitiless sea, have each, in turn, been imaged ; but a gibbet !—to hang in the winds of heaven till my bones drop joint from joint !—never, never did I picture aught so horrible.”

As he ended this soliloquy, the dissonant sounds occasioned by the removal of the bolts guarding the door attracted his attention, and brought to mind that it was an unusual hour for the jailor to visit him.—“ Some forlorn wretch comes to keep me company in this den of misery,” said he, as the sound of voices blended with the grating of the lock. The door fell back as he spoke, and Tarleton sprung forward to grasp his hand. Warm but sorrowful was his greeting ; while Clifford, remembering that he had so lately injured him by suspecting his disinterestedness, knew not how to atone. Tarleton saw he was embarrassed, and conjecturing the cause, said—

said—" I can perceive you have been mentally calumniating my character ; and, to confess the truth, appearances are a little against me ; yet I do not utterly despair of adducing something in exculpation, as far as relates to my delay. Fully satisfied in my own mind that you are innocent, and will be acquitted, I conceived I should be doing you a greater service by advocating your cause with the commanding officer, than in making personal condolence my first duty. Colonel Wriothsley was not in the fort when your letter arrived ; I had therefore to wait his return, and the result proved that I did well. He is as favourably biassed as you could desire—voluntarily proffers to exert his influence for the preservation of your commission until your fate is decided, and will also appear and give testimony in your behalf, provided you think he can be of the smallest service ; in short, he has shewn himself far from a summer friend,

and I take the interest he displays regarding you as a happy augury of the future."

Clifford was deeply affected, not so much by the generosity of his colonel as by consciousness that he owed all to the assiduous and warm support of that friend whose fidelity, in a moment of despondency, he had dared to question. —"Tarleton," said he, "if I could be said to depend on man since Lochullin died, it was on you; yet I will not conceal that my suspicious nature was tempted to wrong you for a few hours delay—hours which were so occupied as to shame every word by which I would try to thank you. Founding your reliance on my innocence solely on a brief and hasty scrawl, written without connexion or perspicuity, it is high time that I give you more cogent proofs whereon to rest your exculpatory verdict; listen, therefore, while I endeavour to string together those circumstances which have placed

placed me in this melancholy predicament."

He then proceeded to narrate, in a succinct but clear manner, every occurrence of moment, from his first rencounter with the two Highlanders at the Queensferry, down to the hour which saw him the inhabitant of a jail; so candid were his disclosures, that even his attachment for Lillias was not concealed, and the base advantage taken by Glen Eynort of his surreptitiously-obtained knowledge of that weakness was bitterly dwelt on. Several times Tarleton betrayed an inclination to interrupt the thread of the tale by violent comment, and when it concluded, something like an oath against Glen Eynort escaped him.—“He is the homicide himself, Clifford,” cried he, vehemently—“the shedding of blood is his pastime, and hostility to every thing virtuous his ruling principle. The devil is evidently allied on his side, and I apprehend we

shall have some trouble to circumvent their infamous plotting; yet let us not despair. Bethink yourself how I can be of service."

"You have already done all that man can do, Tarleton," returned Clifford, with that dismal composure which springs from an implicit belief that the tide of misfortune cannot be impeded. "In the solitude of my prison, and with all the sophistry of a principal, I have repeatedly weighed every thing likely to turn out to my advantage; but so fearfully does the balance preponderate in favour of my adversary, that my death seems all but inevitable. I have been latterly trying to prepare my mind for the worst, that death may not find me slumbering; grieve not, my friend, that so it must be—long life ranks not always as a blessing."

"You misunderstand me, Clifford," exclaimed Tarleton. "I reckon life as lightly as most men in the field; but to

go out of the world on a gibbet!—no, no, I cannot think calmly of aught so ignominious. I would to Heaven that I could, with the point of my sword, teach this monster Glen Eynort a little humanity and principle! we are scarcely quit on old scores—so I am of opinion that a morning call might have a happy result.”

“Go not near him, my friend,” earnestly aspired Clifford; “if you do so, you are lost irretrievably; he is like the serpent in the mortal poison of his sting, and in his pitiless nature and iciness of heart still more closely resembles the same loathsome reptile. A scaffold, I grant, is a horrible arena whereon to contend with death; yet God will give me strength to ascend it. Go not near him, Tarleton.”

“And can I do nothing?” inquired the other, mournfully; “but must I know my friend innocent, yet coolly stand by and see him perish?”

“Let

“ Let me think,” said Clifford, musing —“ yes, there is one way in which you might contribute to my peace. Glen Eynort boasted that he would lead Lillias Macara to the altar, and that too before the worms had done feasting on these devoted limbs; he vaunted that she should be won over to believe in my guilt—to hold my memory in detestation; and, as far as only concerns myself, so let it be. But Lillias—go warn her, Tarleton, never to become his bride, as she would avoid perdition; say that you repeat the injunctions of a dying man, who asks no favour but a steadfast rejection of Glen Eynort. These eyes shall never more behold her, but if she is saved, I shall close them in peace.”

“ And if her salvation is to be effected by the speedy conveyance of your message,” returned Tarleton, “ look upon it as already accomplished. But before we part, I cannot refrain from naming a forlorn hope. I know your spirit will re-
volt

volt at what I am going to propose, but remember that you are innocent—that, if you wait till your removal to Inverness, the opportunity will be gone, never more to return. This building is not so secure as its guardians imagine; look at these bars, so deeply corroded by the saline breeze of the sea; a strong arm might easily wrench them from their hold.” As he spoke, he pointed significantly to the grating of the window.

“I understand you,” answered Clifford, “but am not yet sunk so low in fortitude as to purchase liberty at such a price. If I cannot re-enter the world openly, I will never skulk through it as an outlaw. Let my life be taken, if the laws of the land so will it, for, branded with dishonour, it would be worthless.”

“But suppose you were merely to keep out of the way for a few months,” rejoined Tarleton—“much might come
to

to light in testification of your innocence. Let me prevail on you to attempt escaping; I cannot submit to see you thus sacrificed."

"Your advice is wasted, Tarleton," said Clifford, in a resolute tone. "Fly I will not, though my prison-doors stood open, unless I can do so without discredit. As I said before, life is valueless without a full acquittal; think you, therefore, I will tacitly admit myself guilty, by shunning that investigation which, as an innocent man, I ought to invite? No, Tarleton, I cannot consent to corroborate all that my persecutor falsely lays to my charge, by turning my back like a coward. Encourage me rather to act consistently to the end, and, as in the outset, testify against him to the brink of eternity."

"I will press the matter no more," returned Tarleton; "but if your safety cannot be so ensured, I trust you do not
mean

mean to despise every aid. The first counsel in the land must be engaged in your behalf."

"That shall be as far as my trifling means allows," observed Clifford, with a sad smile. "Whoever undertakes to plead my cause will be so poorly paid, that I had almost determined to be my own advocate."

"This is madness," exclaimed Tarleton; "and were I to encourage you in it, I should hold myself guilty of conniving at your self-destruction. Counsel must and shall be had. Let me write to your friends in England, Clifford, provided you are averse to so doing yourself. I will turn beggar rather than see your life thus thrown away."

"I have no friends but yourself, Tarleton," was the gloomy answer; "so take not up the pen, neither become beggar on my account; no relative I have on earth will part with a shilling to save me

me from the gallows; believe me, my friend, there is no one to write to."

"Then we must exert our own energies the more," rejoined Tarleton, his hitherto-overcast face suddenly brightening; "a lingering hope is yet at my heart, and before we meet again, I will prove whether it is, like all that has gone before it, a broken reed. I remember an old schoolfellow, a generous-hearted lad, educated for the Scottish bar—but more concerning him hereafter. God bless you! whatever way matters go, depend on seeing me at your side."

They shook hands, and parted.

CHAPTER II.



Stately stepp'd he east the wa',
And stately stepp'd he west ;
Full seventy years his head had seen,
But scarce seven years of rest.

Hardyknute.

THE sudden gleam of hope that had cheered Tarleton in the depth of his perplexity, was the recollection that one of his earliest friends was an eminent advocate at the Scottish bar; and to his well-known professional abilities he determined to entrust Clifford's cause. No sooner, therefore, had he arrived at Fort George, and exchanged a few words with colonel Wriothsesley, than he set about inditing a letter on the subject. This done to his satisfaction, he came to the conclusion that he could not better employ

employ the interval that required to elapse before he could receive an answer, than in visiting Glen Rimmon; to deliver Clifford's message to Miss Macara was the motive to which he mentally ascribed his anxiety to make the journey, yet, had he properly investigated his reasons, he would have discovered that some latent hopes of more effectually serving his friend were of greater cogency; it seemed more than possible that, when near the scene of Lochullin's death, he might gather much information, tending to substantiate Clifford's defence; and under this impression he started for Inverness, whence, with hired horses and a guide, he bent his course towards the country of the Clan Rimmon.

The first night he took up his quarters at Ardgy, and received from honest Murdoch Bain a new and elaborate version of the fatal and mysterious transaction in the Glack of Craig Aral. Having

ing been told the tale in fifty different ways, the innkeeper had thought it requisite to quietly compare these together, and from the heterogeneous mass draw such inferences as would assist him in vamping up a narration likely to be acceptable to his customers, the greater part of whom had a natural attachment to fable and romance; the consequence was, that Tarleton had infinite difficulty in recognizing any one incident with which he was acquainted, in the ridiculously minute and extravagant relation, stuttered forth, in mutilated English, by mine host of Ardgy; had he not relied implicitly on Clifford's veracity, it is possible his mind might have received a very unfavourable impression, from thus encountering, in the outset, a seemingly-disinterested man so stubbornly convinced of his guilt.

Between Ardgy and Dun Rimmon his attention was chiefly occupied with scheming how he was to obtain an interview

terview with Miss Macara, for, in his hurry, he had not thought of laying aside his uniform, and therefore saw reason to anticipate but a cool reception; in the end he came to the determination of spurning at all clandestine correspondence, and openly approaching the castle.—“Once admitted,” thought he, “the deuce is in it if I do not accomplish my purpose. I will pass myself off as a visitant to the old chief, demean myself modestly, and converse with a smooth tongue, until the lady comes within my orbit; then, no matter in whose hearing, out with my errand, and decamp. I only pray the devil may have whisked Glen Eynort out of the way for a space; his lynx eye would mark me in a moment, and mar all. But *n’importe*; I shall make the attempt, though I cannot bargain for the issue.”

In accordance with this resolution, he prepared to throw an expression of nonchalance and gaiety into his countenance
when

when he should appear before the chieftain ; and as he ascended the Dun, pressed his horse forward at a brisk trot, in order that no time should be given for canvassing the question of his exclusion, in case any member of the family descried his approach. In this respect, however, fortune favoured him even more than he dared to anticipate—but one person's eye caught the bright flashing of his jacket through the budding trees that clothed the steep, and that person was Lillias. Except to take a last look of her brother's remains, she had kept herself secluded in her own apartment from the date of Clifford's imprisonment, and it was while vacantly gazing from its window that she noted the arrival of such an unexpected guest. Her anxious glance quickly detected in him the unlucky stranger who had formerly borne testimony with his blood to the intemperate passion of Glen Eynort, and recollecting also that he was Clifford's friend,

friend, it appeared evident that his visit was, in some way or other, connected with his fate.—“ If I remain here,” thought she, “ I shall never know what tidings he brings ; let me therefore summon up resolution befitting my situation and the task that is before me—it is a duty I owe equally to the dead and to the living ; be still then, my trembling heart, and do not fail me in this encounter. My stern grandsire—the guilt-speaking eyes of Glen Eynort are in array to forbid it ; yet meet this stranger I will, though their conjoined wrath strike me dead on the threshold of the audience-chamber.”

Unaware how much he was indebted to accident, Tarleton had meanwhile reached the open sweep in front of the castle. Casting a hasty and somewhat apprehensive glance round about him, he suddenly descried the waving of female drapery in an arbour, partly screened from the observation of those within
the

the building; the garments were of the hue of sorrow, and, sanguine in his expectations of speedily concluding his mission, he dismounted, gave his horse to the guide to hold, and hurried towards the friendly recess. But disappointment awaited him, for aunt Marjory was the lady whose floating train had acted as a decoy.

The learned spinster sat immersed in deep meditation, and the open book she held in her hand announced what had given birth to it. Something bordering on a shriek, or rather squeak, escaped her, when she beheld a wight, robed in scarlet and gold, as if by magic, start up before her; but as the apparition bore a form calculated to find favour in a lady's eyes, she quickly suppressed her alarm, and accepted his apology. Her memory did not serve her so far as to identify him as the officer who had fought with Glen Eynort, but she was not slow in

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discovering that he wore the uniform of the regiment Clifford belonged to. Eager to solve the mystery connected with his visit, she invited him to take part of her seat; and conceiving that he had most opportunely stumbled on an able auxiliary, Tarleton, nothing loth, obeyed.

“I am sorry, ma’am, I should have so unluckily broken in upon your studies,” said he, while the lady was preparing for a systematic attack. “My business at Dun Rimmon Castle——”

“Was not with a lady,” interrupted Miss Marjory, with a frightful obliquity of glance, which she intended for an expression of archness.

“Nay,” returned Tarleton, inclined to laugh, though taken by surprise, “I said not so; I come in search of consolation to a wounded spirit, and from what source flows it more lavishly than from the female heart?”

“Ay, ay, woman proves her worth in
the

the day of adversity," exclaimed Miss Marjory. "But how act the lords of the creation in return?—

' Like slaves, they obey her in height of power,
But leave her all in her wintry hour;
And the crowds that swear for her love to die,
Shrunk from the tone of her last sad sigh;
And *this* is man's fidelity !'

But, in good truth, sir knight, you wear not the look of one in search of consolation; your bearing is far from crest-fallen, and your apparel right goodly to behold."

"My bearing belies me, lady," retorted Tarleton, entering into her humour; "though, in justice to your discernment, I must admit that my sorrows are only reflected. In pity to a luckless wight, procure me a few minutes conversation with the fair Miss Lillias Macara."

"Ha! lies the wind in that quarter?" ejaculated the lady, with feigned surprise. "Learn, stranger, that you ask what no daughter of the race of Mac-

rimmon can grant consistently with that innate dignity which is her birthright. I divine your errand, but the black banner flapped too recently over these hoary walls to leave a chance of success attending on your mission. Depart, for Lillias Macara sees no one but her own people; if you linger, scaith may come to both."

"And let it come if it will, as far as I am concerned," said Tarleton, carelessly. "But, since our parley has thus closed, I must see sir Colin; *he* may perhaps prove less obdurate to my entreaty."

"To the trial then," returned Miss Marjory, "and with what spirit you may. Yet stay—I will be your guide to the chieftain's presence; and Heaven forefend you need not also an intercessor! You are the advocate of that man of blood who slew our Lochullin, and duke William himself, were he still in being, might calculate on no worse a reception. Neither the hospitality nor the security

security of my father's hearth will be violated, but, when you go forth, you will go with a malediction as deep and heart-given as that which the mighty Kehama imprecates on the audacious Ladurlad. As we are on the subject, pray what is your opinion of that 'singularly-wild and original' poem by your countryman Southey, which, you may perceive, I have been perusing?"

"Upon my word, ma'am," replied Tarleton, mirth blending with impatience, "I feel in no mood for critical dissertation at this moment; my first wish is to leave the curse of Kehama where it lies, and dare that of sir Colin Macrimmon with as little delay as possible."

"Poor youth!" ejaculated Miss Marjory, in a voice of contemptuous pity; "I have frequently heard it averred, that the generality of your countrymen were not endued with extraordinary acumen, but never before did I meet

with so melancholy an instance. Well may our Scottish reviewers make the Southerons tremble, if I am to judge of intellect beyond the Tweed from the specimen now received."

In all probability the disquisition would have continued much longer, had not a servant opportunely made his appearance, and intimated that sir Colin, having seen a stranger arrive, had dispatched him to give attendance. Tarleton immediately requested he would inform the chieftain that an officer of the — regiment desired an interview; and the man departed with his message. Before Miss Marjory and her companion had reached the gate of the castle, he returned, to say that the request was granted; and the Englishman was speedily ushered into the old gentleman's presence.

As he entered, sir Colin was pacing the room with a slow and stately step, and the thick clustering of his silver hair

hair was insufficient to hide the stern knitting of his brows, which betokened the visitor but barely welcome. His youngest grandchild was his only companion, and when he first caught a glance of her figure, Tarleton was led to hope that fortune had proved particularly kind; but a more minute examination quickly undeceived him. The chieftain returned his obeisance with ostentatious politeness, begged him to be seated, but remained standing himself, and, on the whole, seemed far from easy.

Having previously reasoned himself into the belief that a straightforward open course of proceeding was the best, Tarleton took advantage of the pause that succeeded his introduction, and resolutely dashed out the nature of his business.—“ I have waited on sir Colin Macrimmon,” he began, “ in consequence of an event which, I feel assured, occasions deep sorrow to us both. I belong to the —— regiment, and have, for a

considerable length of time, been the fellow-soldier and friend of lieutenant Clifford. To the grief and surprise of all his brother-officers, that young man has lately been accused of a barbarous crime, and thrown into a common jail. I trust this intrusion will be forgiven me, when I add, that it is on his account I force myself on the notice of the chief of Macrimmon. The principal part of my commission relates to another, yet I am not the less anxious to gather what information I can concerning this most mysterious transaction."

"Make no apologies, sir," returned sir Colin; "I have no doubt but your reasons are perfectly sufficient, and shall be happy to discharge the duties of hospitality during the period you may feel inclined to honour us with your company. I regret my kinsman, Macrimmon of Glen Eynort, is out sauntering on the hills, but a messenger shall be dispatched to accelerate his return; meanwhile,

meanwhile, if the explanations of an old man like myself can tend to enlighten you, it is at your service. Your friend—and little credit is there in such friendship—your friend is a murderer—a cold-hearted, traitorous murderer! my grandson's blood, the blood of the last Macara, is on his head; and may God forget these grey hairs, if I forget to avenge it!"

"Amen!" responded Miss Marjory. "Though revenge is looked upon, in these degenerate days, as a barbarous vice, I will maintain, with the ancients, that, under some circumstances, it becomes a virtue and a duty. I am indeed far from advocating the pursuing of our enemy to the peril of his life for trivial offences—rather, on such occasions, let a generous forgiveness be extended; but when a kinsman's blood has been shed, it cries both to man and to Heaven for condign punishment."

"This is judging my friend's case bitterly," said the young soldier, frowning as

he listened; “were he even guilty, as you say, the most relentless justice might well spare a sigh for the fate of such a man as Clifford.”

“Curse me not again with the sound of his ill-boding name,” shouted sir Colin; “it peals in my ear, as the harbinger of misery and disgrace. Think you that I judge too bitterly, youth, when the culprit is he who first sowed sedition in my family—he whose reprobate heart saw no better path to affluence than through the bosom of my too-confiding boy?”

“I have been told,” observed Tarleton, “that, on his deathbed, your grandson acquitted my friend unreservedly, and that Miss Macara professes herself ready to bear testimony to this effect. May I not be permitted to learn, from that lady’s own lips, on what authority this assertion is founded, especially as it is requisite I see her for another purpose?”

“Miss

“ Miss Macara sees no strangers at present,” answered sir Colin, abruptly; “ any business, therefore, you may have with her, can be transacted only through me. Regarding the idle rumours you may have heard, I shall merely say, that by my own evidence I can confute them, having heard the last declaration, and witnessed the dissolution of my grandson. I regret you have travelled so far and to so little advantage, yet must beg leave to end this unpleasant conference. Unn, let refreshments be ordered for the gentleman.”

The stiffness of the chieftain completely defeated Tarleton’s system of attack, and in vain did he rack his brain for some stratagem that would stand him true in such exigency. To publicly depute Miss Marjory or Unn to convey his message to Miss Macara, seemed the only feasible course left for his adoption; and he had come to the resolution of pursuing it, when sir Colin,

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lin, as he threw open the door of the apartment with an intention of retiring, suddenly exclaimed to some one in the lobby—"What audacity is this? am I to have no control in my own dwelling, that intruders haunt me on all sides? Back, madam, to your room; no rebel daughter is privileged to appear in my presence till she is sent for."

"Nay, sir Colin," said the voice of Glen Eynort, who had heard the concluding words as he strode along the passage, "you must treat my fair kinswoman less harshly; and since she manifests a desire to come amongst us again, encourage rather than abash her. Let me stand forth as a successful advocate between you, and from this voluntary act prognosticate that, ere long, our fair Lillias will be all that we wish or hope."

Without giving the chieftain time to offer aught in opposition, he seized the passive hand of the trembling Lillias,
and

and led her forward into the room. A start and sudden whitening of the cheek proclaimed his astonishment, when he discovered whom it contained; but he quickly recovered his self-possession, though the tempestuous changing of his complexion told that all was not at peace within.—“ Now, now !” he exclaimed—“ this is honour indeed ! Methinks, sir, our parting, on a former occasion, was not of a nature to entitle Dunrimmon to this visit.”

“ Be assured,” replied Tarleton, while fire kindled in his eye, “ I presumed not on that circumstance. But I shall have more leisure to return your civilities when I have dispatched my business with your fair companion.—Miss Macara, accident has procured for me what I solicited in vain—an opportunity of questioning you concerning the awful charges preferred against my friend, Charles Clifford. Time permits not of circumlocution, for I can observe this
interview

interview is to be but short. Is he, by the declaration of your deceased brother, guilty or innocent?"

"Innocent," replied Lillias, in a mild but unfaltering voice, and altogether heedless of the frowning faces around her; "Lochullin proclaimed him so, and why, oh! why should it be disbelieved?"

"Silence, moon-stricken wretch!" shouted sir Colin, in a gust of passion. "Unn! Marjory! Glen Eynort! drag that lunatic from my presence, or I shall be roused to forget that she is a woman."

"Heed not the ravings of my unfortunate cousin," interposed Glen Eynort, with feigned commiseration; "her situation requires all the indulgence and tenderness we can bestow; let her remain where she is, and on me fall the duty of putting a curb on any rash tongue that lets one word escape bordering on offence or insult. Mr. Tarleton, I shall
be

be glad to obtain your hearing in another room."

"I shall shortly be at your command," returned Tarleton, negligently; "meanwhile it becomes me to rejoice from my heart at having my implicit reliance on Clifford's innocence strengthened by the voice of Lochullin's sister. Miss Macara, I take both pride and pleasure in averring, that the anxiety you thus display in your endeavours to defend an unjustly-accused man, have their due meed of gratitude. It is not yet three days since I left Clifford in a prison, reclining on a bed of straw, and preparing to meet with fortitude that doom which his desponding imagination conceives inevitable. In the course of a long and melancholy conversation, your name came to be frequently mentioned; for, even in the midst of his own calamities, he had his hopes and his fears for those he valued. He apprehends that the machinations which have worked his ruin, will
also

also eventually undermine your happiness, and he chiefly grounds his apprehensions on the boasts of your kinsman, Macrimmon of Glen Eynort; that personage (and though he hears me, I reckon it little) vaunted to my unhappy friend, that, before one year elapsed, he would hail you as his bride. Need I add, that Clifford knows him too well to doubt his making the attempt—that he looks upon his success as the harbinger of your utter and certain misery? These were the words his fears drew from him: —‘ Go warn her, Tarleton, never to become the bride of Glen Eynort, if she would avoid perdition; say that you repeat the injunctions of a dying man, who asks no favour but a strict adherence to this his last advice. These eyes shall never more behold her, but, if she is saved, I shall close them in peace.’

The unwet cheeks of Lillias told that she had no more tears to shed, but in her bosom there still slumbered a remnant

nant of feminine pride that whispered her dignity had received a shock ; it was this that made her turn sternly on Glen Eynort, and say—" Had you, sir, the audacity to speak thus lightly of Loch-ullin's sister ?"

" Since her brother's murderer declares so, why should the lady doubt it ?" replied he, with his usually cold sneer, yet somewhat embarrassed. " Nian Macrimmon would be right sorry to stake his veracity against that of a homicide."

" Right, right," exclaimed sir Colin, aunt Marjory, and Unn, in the same breath ; the first adding, as he turned to the Englishman—" Young stranger, beware in time ; he tampers not with triflers who seeks his opponents at Dunrimmon."

" And right, right, say I also," echoed Lillias, still maintaining her resolute tone. " I am fully satisfied in my own mind that the tale is true ; the boaster
does

does well, therefore, not to attempt refutation. Friend of a persecuted and wronged man! from my heart do I thank you for assisting to expose a vain-glorious hypocrite. Go back to the jail of —, and tell its forlorn inmate not to waste another thought on Lillias Macara; tell him that, sooner than become the bride of Glen Eynort, she would ascend that same scaffold from which she unceasingly implores Heaven to save him; tell him—but surely, surely this will suffice.”

“Enough,” said Tarleton, in a tone of satisfaction; “now the object I had in view is attained. Ladies—sir Colin, I entreat your pardon if this visit has given offence; and you, Mr. Macrimmon, I wait your leisure.”

“Do you travel on horseback?” inquired the latter, sullenly, while a savage scowl furrowed his brow.

Tarleton replied in the affirmative.

“Then I will bear you company for
a mile

a mile or two," said the other, with feigned calmness. " Ride slowly, and you will be soon overtaken."

This was agreed to by a significant nod, and the speaker instantly withdrew. Tarleton was about to follow, when sir Colin, with an evident struggle, announced that refreshments were forthcoming, intimating, at the same time, that the duties of hospitality were equally due to friend and foe, according to the creed of his forefathers. The Englishman smiled as he declined the proffered civility; and, without waiting to hear aunt Marjory's trite comment, or Miss Macara's trembling entreaty that he would beware of him who was to be his companion through the glen, made his bow, and departed.

CHAPTER III.

I pass, like night, from land to land ;
I have strange power of speech ;
The moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me ;
To him my tale I teach.

Rhyme of the ancient Mariner.

TARLETON found his guide and horses where he had left them ; but when he saw him preparing to remount, the man could not suppress an exclamation of astonishment. Though desired not to approach the castle during his employer's absence, he had mentally ascribed this to modesty or ignorance in the Englishman, never doubting but an order would speedily arrive for lodging the horses in the stable and himself in the kitchen, which, from the exterior aspect of the building, he felt inclined to believe would turn
out

out very desirable quarters for a hungry man. Alas! the retrograde movement that followed Tarleton's reappearance put all his delightful visions to flight; the delicious viands on which he had feasted by anticipation vanished like a dream of the morning, and instead of seating himself at a chieftain's groaning board, he had to contemplate, with resignation, a fasting ride to Ardgry.

As Glen Eynort had recommended, Tarleton permitted his horse to move on at a slow pace; yet he had nearly reached the extremity of the glen before the Highlander overtook him. When he came in view, the guide, as he was directed, rode on before; for the portentous cloud that sat on Glen Eynort's countenance announced a discussion ill calculated for the ears of an uninterested auditor. He was mounted, and Tarleton had scarcely time to remark that he was enveloped in a large tartan cloak, ere he said—"Our acquaintance, sir, commenced

menced unpropitiously, and unpropitiously I fear it will end, provided you listen not to reason. Already did this hand nearly deprive you of life, and it would still seem that by it you are ultimately destined to fall, else why come you to brand me with vile epithets before my kindred, merely on the authority of a wretched felon? But there still remains a way by which you may turn aside my just displeasure."

"It is scarcely requisite to name it," observed Tarleton, in a careless manner; "it is very likely my candour may have given offence, but that I am neither inclined to regret nor to atone for; those who are apt to get testy at hearing the truth told, should not throw themselves in the way of hearing it; Miss Macara was the person I addressed, all the others who shared in our conference did so uninvited. As to what the hand of Mr. Macrimmon may be destined to accomplish, I am not sufficiently skilled in divination

vation to decide ; suffice it to say, that if it be by it I am preordained to fall, I shall evince no desire to evade the blow."

"Then you will not listen to my alternative?" exclaimed Glen Eynort, his lips trembling as he spoke.

"Nay, if it will give you relief to disclose it," returned Tarleton, "speak on; I merely expressed a conjecture that your time might be thrown away."

"Then," rejoined his companion, "I propose, as the primary step to reconciliation, that you return with me to Dunrimmon Castle, and in the presence of sir Colin and his granddaughters, acknowledge that I have reasoned you into a thorough conviction that the homicide Clifford calumniated me, when he affirmed that I had vaunted Lillias Macara would soon become my bride."

"A goodly proposal, my honourable Highlander!" exclaimed Tarleton, with a smile of sovereign disdain. "So, so!"
to

to escape the chastisement I have merited by my candour, I have only to acknowledge myself a lying, false-hearted villain, before two fair ladies and your stately chief!—really I have not yet discovered aught so intimidating about Mr. Macrimmon, as to make me purchase his forbearance by the sacrifice of every honourable principle. On the whole, however, the proposition is worthy of the proposer; and were it acted upon, might, to a certain extent, do away with any bad impressions. Sir Colin, the learned Miss Marjory, and Miss Unn, would, in all probability, lend a willing and believing ear to my recantation; but Miss Macara—in truth, good sir, I fear you have forfeited her good opinion past redemption.”

“ She is mad,” furiously aspirated Glen Eynort—“ stark staring mad; it can be proved by a thousand extravagancies. But am I to infer from this insulting

sulting sportiveness, that a direct refusal is given to the request my injured honour prompts me to make?"

"Most unquestionably," was the reply; "sooner than utter the base revocation you dictate, I would submit to remain dumb for ever. May not this declaration end our present conference? having far to ride, I would fain put my horse to a smarter pace."

"I must beg leave to be your escort round the shoulder of Craig Horrodale," answered Glen Eynort, as he pointed to the black precipitous mass, by sweeping round the base of which the path left the populous dale that opened into Glen Rimmon. A deathlike paleness overspread his whole countenance, but he said no more.

Divining his reasons for this piece of courtesy, Tarleton made no comments, but in silence rode on at a quick trot. Glen Rimmon, and subsequently the habitations in Erridale, were soon hid-

den by the asperities of Craig Horro-dale, and, without slackening in their speed, they plunged into a wide waste of moorland, where the tramp of their horses, and the occasional shriek of such heath-fowl as they disturbed, were the only sounds betokening life. Tarleton was beginning to marvel how long he was to be thus accompanied, when, pointing to a mass of gray rocks, of considerable altitude, standing, in isolated majesty, in the centre of the moor, Glen Eynort demanded if he would turn aside to visit them?

“For what purpose?” inquired the Englishman. “If we are once more to peril our lives against each other, it must not be under circumstances that may bring the conqueror to the gallows.”

“A trembling heart finds ready excuse,” retorted Glen Eynort. “Take the matter as you will, we are on equal terms; and if I, the injured party, choose to demand satisfaction and run all hazards,

zards, who but a dastard would avail himself of so palpable a subterfuge?"

"Dastard!" echoed Tarleton, fire flashing from his eyes as he turned his horse's head towards the rocks—"Lead on, braggart, where you list!"

Glen Eynort made no rejoinder, but took the lead, and they bent their course towards the Giant's Cairn. As they drew near to its craggy precipices, Tarleton perceived that they were not, as he had at first imagined, separate masses of rock piled rudely together, but compact jagged crags abruptly shooting up from a peat-bog; in some places they rose to the height of an hundred feet, in others to little more than fifty; dwarf bushes were rooted in the interstices, and the circumference of the whole might amount to a quarter of a mile—at least so he inferred, after making half the circuit.

On gaining the firm ground under the cliffs, Glen Eynort led the way leisurely to a wide rift, which cut the cairn per-

pendicularly to its base ; a thick screen of underwood in a certain measure concealed this, and a small pellucid rivulet fought its way through the gap, over a channel obstructed by stones and roots. Here Glen Eynort alighted, and motioning his companion to do the same, made fast his bridle-reins to a stunted birch. This effected, he plunged into the yawning chasm ; and, feeling it incumbent to follow without comment, Tarleton also set stones and copsewood at defiance, and kept closely in his rear. After struggling for some minutes with the many obstructions that barred an entrance, they suddenly emerged into the most singular valley he had ever beheld ; it was a spacious bowl, completely in the centre of the cairn, and encircled with a lofty serrated rampart of gray weather-stained rock. The hollow was carpeted with short verdant grass, and in the fissures of the encompassing wall, a variety of dwarf trees found

found nourishment. Nothing endued with life was visible except themselves; and though it was a still and breathless day, no sound giving notice of animal existence broke the deep melancholy solitude. At length a voice echoed mournfully among the rocks—it was that of Glen Eynort.—“ Mr. Tarleton,” said he, with sternness, “ this is a spot well suited for death-strife, not only from its solitariness, but from the gloom and mystery which local tradition throws over it; had we time for trifling, I would narrate, for your amusement, such a Highland legend as would become you well hereafter to retail in your own country, should you have the good fortune to revisit it; but, as it is, must withhold the tale, and proceed to discuss more momentous matters. You have a sword by your side; and I too am prepared.” He threw off his *brachan* as he spoke, beneath which he had hitherto concealed the weapon.

“ I am glad,” said Tarleton, as he unbuckled his sword, “ that it is so we decide the matter; against the precision with which you level a pistol I have little chance, but with a good steel blade I am your equal.”

“ I rejoice to hear you say so,” returned the other, “ for, in truth, it is of no importance to me what weapon I grasp; I have, before now, drawn blood as dexterously with the sword, as I pick down my man with a bullet. And now let us for a moment look quietly round, for in this valley one of us finds his tomb; here will his flesh waste away, and his bones bleach unnoted, for no human foot dares invade the solitude of the Giant’s Cairn, except his who fears neither man nor devil; the bravest Highlander of our mountains shuns this glen, as he would the mouth of the bottomless pit; the flocks that range the adjacent common, and even the animals of the chace, avoid it with instinctive terror; no bird
chirps

chirps from those crags, or builds in these inviting bushes—nay, if peasants' tales are to be credited, the lordly eagle himself is often seen to take a wide sweep that he may not soar above it; it is also asserted that the very winds never kiss those broken pinnacles, but that a calm—a dead, sickening calm, reigns perpetually. Do you not admire the spot I have chosen for our mortal combat?"

"I look upon it as well suited for murder such as he who survives will be conceived to have perpetrated," answered Tarleton, who could not subdue a sensation of awe. "Without endangering the honour of either, I think this rencounter might be deferred, until we had seconds to attest our not having acted like common assassins."

"The alternative rests entirely with yourself," observed Glen Eynort: "as a conqueror, a coward, or a friend only, you can quit this glen."

“ Then a conqueror be it,” exclaimed the Englishman ; “ for the title of coward itself were preferable to that of friend to such a man.”

Glen Eynort merely vouchsafed an insolent sneer ; and, mutually enraged, a desperate conflict ensued—mutually impressed with the idea that the death of one was to be the only signal for separation, they sought each other’s lives with all the eagerness long pent-up animosity and the desire of self-preservation could possibly give birth to. Equally masters of the science on which they had staked their being, a few moments sufficed to shew that the contest would not be speedily terminated ; and this discovery, while it engendered more caution, also rendered passion more vindictive. At length Tarleton began to feel his strength giving way ; and the instant his antagonist became aware of this, his ardour augmented. Seeing the chances turning against him, the Englishman
threw

threw all his hopes of conquering on a feint; the sword of his adversary was permitted to pierce his coat, and slide across his breast; and had not a keen eye stood his friend, Glen Eynort would, the ensuing moment, have been paid home for that slight wound by a deadly thrust; as it was, he recoiled back with so much impetuosity as to lose his balance, and with the weapon of his foe at his bosom he fell prostrate on his back.

Tarleton was about to announce to his humbled enemy that he gave him his forfeited life, when a wild and thrilling cry rung through the valley, seemingly as if it came from the cloudless vault above. Not only the conqueror, but the fallen Glen Eynort, threw a glance upwards, to learn from whence that startling cry proceeded.—“It is the spectre of the Cairn,” the latter exclaimed, as, at the same instant, the eyes of both became rivetted on a gigantic figure stationed on a pinnacle of the cir-

cumjacent rocks, and he covered his face in real or affected horror. Not so the Englishman; with a steady unflinching gaze he scrutinized the apparition, till he assured himself that it was an aged man, of lofty stature and thin cadaverous visage; a Highland plaid fluttered round him, and from under the low bonnet on his head fell a profusion of long waving hair, white as the driven snow. Tarleton was about to demand the cause of his shout, when, tossing his arms with the fierce and woe-denouncing gestures of a maniac, the unknown exclaimed, as he pointed to Glen Eynort —“ Touch him not, son of the South; he falls not by a hand like thine. These sorrow-seeing eyes have long ago traced him from the cradle to the narrow house; I may not turn away from the dark sight, for, even now, I see passing along the hillside a crowd of dim ghostly shadows.— Why do I see led forth, like a felon, yonder black-haired boy? I warned him
that

that blood would be streaming; I had seen, in my sleep, the Glack of Craig Aral—the dying man—the drifting boat—the prison—the grave. Fools! fools! let the youth go; see ye not the red fox that lapped Lochullin's life-stream crouching safely in his lair? Let the black-haired stripling go—let him sweep the briny wave, and he will gather glory on every shore he touches. He too, yon tartaned Gael, has fled to the ocean with his blood-stained *bidag*—it has thrown him on a land of exile; oh! in mercy hide those frightful shadows that haunt his path! And that cavern—so dark, so misty, that it looks like a bottomless grave—what unholy scenes is it doomed to witness! That bright sulphureous flash has told enough; that head, white as the foam of the sea, is on its gory pillow. Shew me not the face—no more, no more.”

The speaker clasped his hands in unaffected agony as he ended this incom-

prehensible harangue, and his eyes rolled so far back in their sockets as entirely to conceal the pupils. Tarleton felt his flesh creep on his bones as he gazed on a visage so haggard and full of misery, and so intently was he occupied in observing it, that he did not miss Glen Eynort from his feet, until the unknown pointed to his disappearing figure in the cleft leading from the valley.—“ Follow him not, follow him not,” he exclaimed; “ in due time the skin of the red fox shall be taken, but thine is not the hand to strip it. Yonder, yonder he flies,” and he turned half round, as if looking over the distant moor; “ fear is at his heart, and, though MacRyri warns, crime, and dishonour, and death, are before. He trembles, yet believes me not; he thinks he will root up the sprout that Macrimmon’s tree has shot up in the desert; but that sprout shall flourish broadly, when he is but a sapless and severed branch. Why shouts yon white-haired dotard

dotard that Ninian, of Glen Eynort, sprung from the loins of his gifted fosterfather? Away, away with such idle raving! But the march of the grave is past, and the eye of the heaven-forgotten may, for a time, close on the grinning faces of the dead."

With an agility to which his aged frame appeared a stranger, the prophet of the cairn sprung from his elevated station as he concluded, and in a few seconds his flitting figure seemed to melt away among the grey crags over which he darted.

So rapid and unlooked-for had been the changes of this strange scene, that Tarleton, when he found himself alone in the valley of the cairn, could hardly credit the reality of what had passed; in order to elucidate the mystery, he scrambled up the rocky wall to where the seer had disappeared, in hopes of finding him hid in some crevice, but his research was vain; many clefts, sufficiently large for
the

the purpose of concealment, underwent examination, but none of them were occupied: nor was the keen glance of inquiry he sent over the adjacent moor better rewarded; not a speck dotted the heath in any direction, and the only human form in view was that of Glen Eynort, galloping furiously round the shoulder of Craig Horrodale. Confused and dissatisfied, he at length felt necessitated to content himself with the belief that the stranger had taken refuge in some fissure which he had no chance of discovering, and that he was either some wandering lunatic, or a well-disciplined tool of Glen Eynort's, hidden amongst the rocks, and instructed to make his appearance, should his employer's life become in jeopardy. Conceiving it useless to prolong his stay in a spot so haunted, he again descended into the valley, and restoring his sword to its scabbard, departed through the same rent by which he had found access.

His

His horse stood where he had left him, quietly cropping the herbage within his reach, and mounting him without delay, he bade adieu to the Giant's Cairn. In the course of half-an-hour he met his guide, who had turned back in order to ascertain the cause of his sluggishness; and after passing another night with Murdoch Bain, finished his journey without further adventure.

CHAPTER IV.
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I did not faint—no, though a sickening pang  
Tugg'd at my heart, and made the cold sweat creep,  
Like ice-drops, o'er my body; yet, even then,  
Did conscious innocence uphold my soul,  
And turn'd the horrid words to senseless sounds,  
That ought not to dismay. *The Convict.*

THE day at length arrived on which Clifford exchanged the jail of —— for that of Inverness; and finally the ominous trumpet-blast, that intimates the arrival of the Lords of Justiciary on their periodical circuit, warned him to prepare for trial. On the same eventful morning the —— regiment left Fort George for the south, in order, as it was generally supposed, to embark for foreign service; but Tarleton obtained permission to remain behind for a limited time, on purpose that he might be  
near

near his friend at the approaching crisis. Colonel Wriothsesley also delayed his departure from anxiety respecting the issue, and in order to give testimony in favour of the prisoner's previous character, should it be found requisite. It was happy for Clifford that he continued to possess the countenance of this officer as thoroughly as before his accusation, for, had it been otherwise, he would have had far less anxiety to save a life which would have promised to be afterwards the sport of penury and reproach. Indeed so severe was the shock every proud and ambitious feeling had sustained in having been merely charged with a capital crime, that even complete and honourable acquittal seemed barely adequate to restore his spirit to its former buoyancy; re-enter the world under what auspices he might, he felt aware that it must be with a secret sense of degradation at his heart. He was entirely indebted to the exertions of Tarleton

ton for the able counsel retained to advocate his cause; the application made to his old schoolfellow for assistance had been attended with all the success the latter could desire; and he had the satisfaction of proving that not only were rare abilities called into action in his friend's behalf, but the heart of a humane and well-principled man also deeply interested. That the case of his client was desperate, the advocate did not seek to conceal; yet, while he avowed this, he contrived to infuse, at the same time, some portion of hope into the prisoner's bosom. The circumstance of Miss Macara having been pronounced insane by a consultation of medical men, and consequently rendered incapable of giving evidence, disheartened him greatly; he easily perceived how seriously this event weakened the defence, and hinted to Clifford the propriety of his endeavouring, as a forlorn hope, to get the trial postponed till next circuit, when the  
lady's



lady's mind might have regained a state of quiescence sufficient to give validity to her deposition. To this, however, the other strenuously objected; to pass six months more as a prisoner, and in all the agony of suspense, was a species of torture he could not bring himself to invite, more especially as there was no certainty of its being ultimately attended with beneficial consequences; much better rush on to the ordeal at once, and regain honour and liberty, or perish.

When he appeared at the bar, and first beheld his judges and the immense congregation of people the notoriety of the trial had crowded into the courthouse, his fortitude deserted him for a moment; to be obliged to stand forward an object of public comment and wonder, is of itself a bitter punishment, to which none but a worthless and hardened heart can be insensible, and all the support derived from the feeling of conscious innocence was ineffectual in suppressing

pressing momentary trepidation. But as the compact mass of upturned faces, and the ceaseless hum of many tongues became familiar, his strength of mind returned; he gave no further heed to the gaping multitude, but prepared to devote his whole attention to the proceedings of the court.

The usual formalities having been gone through, the indictment was read, accusing the prisoner, Charles Clifford, with having wickedly and feloniously assaulted Æneas Macara, of Lochullin, and mortally wounding him with a stone, or some other missile unknown to the prosecutor, in consequence of which injury the said Æneas Macara did soon thereafter die. A variety of matter conformable to law followed, at the end of which the pannel, in a steady voice, pleaded—*not guilty*.

The proper number of jurors were then sworn, and none of them having been objected to by the prosecutor or  
pannel,

panel, the trial proceeded, the former calling on his witnesses.

As the leading points of evidence have been already detailed in the precognition taken before Craig Aral and M'Corqudale of Ben Ard, it is unnecessary to repeat them. Glen Eynort, Hugh Catnach, and Allan Mac-an-Rhi, were severally examined, and deponed nearly verbatim what they had stated in their previous deposition. As the counsel for the panel had been duly enlightened regarding the vindictive malice that actuated Glen Eynort, and the strong suspicions entertained that he himself ought to be arraigned as the culprit, all the ingenuity and watchfulness incidental to eminent talents were exerted to detect him in some inconsistency—but in vain; though repeatedly warned to answer by the virtue of his oath, and required to swear that he was thoroughly purged of malice, he preserved unshaken his calm port and unfaltering voice,

voice, and replied to every query tending to entrap him with a show of candour and readiness that served the more fully to establish his veracity. The panel's counsel was thus obliged to desist in despair from the attempt to overcome his caution, and, after hearing sir Colin Macrimmon and Craig Aral add their meed to the mass of evidence in favour of the prosecutor, to bring forward such testimony as was to be had touching the defence.

Clifford's chief reliance had been on the evidence of Miss Macara, but the affidavits testifying her insanity rendered it a broken reed; so respectably was her disordered state of mind attested, that no doubt on the subject was admissible; and though Craig Aral, like a conscientious man, had, on the day of the precognition, insisted on taking down, in a regular form, the declaration she emitted, her subsequent derangement went far to create suspicions of  
her

her even then having been sound in intellect. Tarleton endeavoured to establish her sanity, by deposing what had passed in his interview at Dun Rimmon, but without effect; and though colonel Wriothesley bore full testimony to the humane and amiable disposition for which the culprit had been remarkable while under his command, the public mind was too strongly biassed to acknowledge its influence; in short, the counsel for the prosecution seemed to think it perfectly unnecessary to utter a sentence in support of his witnesses; the fact of murder, he said, had been so clearly made out, that his evincing any doubt as to the verdict would be an indirect insult both to judge and jury; the pannel's counsel might say what he thought proper in support of a desperate case, he felt assured there would be no necessity to rise in opposition.

The gentleman who rose on the part of the prisoner at the bar could not conceal

ceal from himself the likelihood of this proving true, yet he conceived it his duty not to give up the contest without a struggle. In a long and able address, he contended that, if it had been the pannel who committed the murder, he would have endeavoured to effect his escape the moment he believed himself likely to be accused; he also dwelt strongly on the possibility of Glen Ey-nort being instigated to give false testimony from motives of personal animosity, and the great encouragement offered him so to do by the sudden death of two most material witnesses, Fasnacloich and Alister Chisholm; the probability of the jury being led to pronounce an unjust verdict, by relying too securely on the evidence of a solitary individual, was likewise set forth, and a speaking appeal made to their after-feelings, in case they should unwittingly condemn an innocent man. He was heard with patience, but manifestly without effect; the counsel

sel



sel in opposition deigned no reply ; and, finally overpowered by the conviction that all he advanced was of no avail, the advocate concluded his fruitless pleading. An eloquent address to the jury followed from the lord on the bench, the tendency of which was decidedly against the party arraigned ; after summing up the evidence, and delivering an elaborate opinion on the case, he submitted the whole for their consideration, and requested them to retire and find their verdict.

The jury were about to obey, when a loud murmur rising from the door of the court-house suspended their departure—it was that deep portentous hum which, on an occasion of serious moment, presages the fluctuation of public opinion, and mayhap some burst of popular fury. It commenced with the crowd stationed without the building, but rapidly acquiring strength and loudness, rolled onward like the first gust of

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a hurricane, till the very sentinel stationed at the door caught the infection, and joined in the shout. In vain did several voices command silence in court—the uproar continued to augment rather than subside; and the constables were beginning to recommend quietness with their batons, when the crowd suddenly clove asunder, and made way for two men, who appeared desirous of reaching the bar. Every feature of Glen Eynort's face underwent a change as he scanned their lineaments, and Clifford's eyes grew dim with astonishment in the same moment. With a trembling heart he began to admit the belief that madness threatened to benight his faculties, when a thousand voices shouted simultaneously—"The drowned men of Loch Ruart are risen! Fasnacloich and Alister Chisholm are at the bar!"

The tumult occasioned by this incomprehensible resurrection was not easily or quickly allayed, and the counsel for  
and

and against the prosecution beheld the trial about to assume a new aspect, at a period when the one sat silent from confidence of having conquered, the other from the melancholy whisperings of despair. Owing to the forms necessary to be gone through, some time elapsed before the depositions of the new witnesses could be received; but at length Fasnacloich was called upon, when the general anxiety became so intense as to occasion an almost-breathless silence throughout the court. His evidence was brief, but conclusive, and, when corroborated by that of Alister Chisholm, went clearly to establish that, at the identical moment Lochullin received his deathblow, the pannel's arms were so entwined with those of the witnesses, that it was utterly impossible he could have hurled the missile. What hand had actually done so neither ventured to surmise; they rather leaned to the supposition that some fragment had accidentally rolled down

from the overhanging cliff, and inflicted that wound for which an innocent man had so nearly suffered. With the exception of Glen Eynort, Tarleton, and the pannel himself, this belief was joyfully and universally adopted; hundreds of faces glowed with pleasure as they congratulated the accused on his miraculous deliverance, and successive huzzas proclaimed that the populace, from being inclined to tear him limb from limb, were ready to shower down on him all the honours of a triumph. Without quitting their box, the jury gave in a verdict of full and honourable acquittal; and in the same moment the persecuted Clifford saw every stain on his character effaced, and was restored to his friends and liberty.

Before this was accomplished, however, a murmur had gone abroad that Glen Eynort was guilty of perjury—a charge his crest-fallen aspect and conscious look went far to substantiate. This  
accusation

accusation he might have found it difficult to repel, had not the counsel conducting the prosecution artfully and ably brought him off. By the way of exculpation it was set forth, that in one instance only had his evidence been palpably contradicted, *videlicet*, in that part wherein he deposed having distinctly identified Clifford in the act of elevating his hand; and how likely was it that this discrepancy arose from his having been deceived by some wind-tossed arm of the many trees that flung their branches over the path! This defence was admitted, yet it did not save the offender from a severe reprimand in the hearing of the whole court; the heinous fault he had been guilty of was decked out in its most glaring and infamous colours, and a more strict adherence to his oath recommended, in terms which it was gall and wormwood to his haughty and stubborn spirit to be necessitated to brook.

In the course of their examination,

Fasnacloich and Chisholm found it necessary to state the manner of their preservation, and the causes that had so long prevented it from being known: It appeared that they maintained their station on the keel of the boat for a considerable time after Mac an Rhi had been washed off, and, as they imagined, consigned to a watery grave. As they soon found themselves drifting into the open sea, their case seemed so hopeless, that, though clinging instinctively to life, they could not suppress a degree of impatience for the arrival of the wave that was to end their sufferings; hour after hour elapsed, and still they shuddered to obey the dictates of despair, and drop into the deep. In the end their resolution was rewarded, by the first beam of the morning enabling them to descry a ship at no great distance; such signals as their situation admitted of were instantly made; they had the happiness of seeing these were observed, and



and in a short time a boat put off to their assistance. But their deliverance was not so complete as they at first imagined; for, if they had avoided Scylla, they were ensnared by Charybdis. The vessel by which they were rescued was a French privateer; and no sooner had they set foot on her deck, than they were told to look upon themselves as prisoners, and were promised all the comforts of foreign bondage. Against this there was no appeal, and their unhappiness was greatly augmented by being denied the consolation of intimating to their friends that they were still in existence. The object of the privateer was the capture of outward-bound American traders, and her commander quickly perceived that the secret retention of the castaways was a mode of acting absolutely requisite for his security; were he to give them liberty, he had no guarantee for their concealing his being on the coast but their bare word; to send

information ashore that they were picked up, was equally calculated to prove injurious; so he unhesitatingly stood away with them to the chops of the Pentland Firth. From this station he was quickly driven by the fancy that he saw an English frigate on the eastern horizon, and with every sail set he stood boldly into the Atlantic to avoid her. In this instance his fears promised to turn out to his profit; for, when least expecting it, he captured a valuable merchantman, with which he instantly bore away homeward rejoicing. But, alas! the fickle goddess jilted him in the very moment he imagined himself independent of her smiles; in sight of his destined port he not only lost his prize, but was compelled to strike to the flag of old England; that frigate which, in the mouth of the Pentland Firth, had merely existed in fancy's eye, finally appeared in reality, kindly piloted him into a British harbour, and so gave freedom

dom to the desponding Highlanders, who were nothing loath to conclude their compulsory voyage. Their return to Scotland was as speedy as circumstances admitted, and most propitious for the persecuted Clifford was their arrival.

As Clifford with his friends left the court-house, followed by the loud plaudits of the variable multitude, he encountered sir Colin Macrimmon; the young man's heart was softened towards all mankind by his late acquittal, and remembering the hospitality he had formerly received at the hands of the gray-haired chief, he resolved to make an attempt at reconciliation. For this purpose he quitted Tarleton's arm, and approached the old man.—“ Sir Colin,” said he, tears glistening in his eyes, “ now that a jury of my countrymen have declared me not the monster you supposed, shall we not forgive and forget? I am about to leave the Highlands

for a distant land, and, before I go, wish to part friends with the grandsire of him whose death has so nearly proved fatal to my own existence."

The chieftain shewed no desire to imitate him in the extension of the olive branch, nor did he vouchsafe to grasp the hand that was proffered in token of amity.—“Before I give or receive pledge of forgiveness,” said he, stiffly, “it is requisite you also clear yourself of another accusation; that done, I shall wish you speed and good fortune. Declare, on your honour, that, never by word or deed, did you seek to beguile my granddaughter into a clandestine correspondence, or in any way to swerve from her duty.”

“On my honour,” answered Clifford, “nothing was farther from my heart than an intention to betray Miss Macara into a mode of conduct systematically deceptive, and meriting the reprehension of her kindred. True it is that I  
did

did not behold her excellence with apathy; neither will I conceal that, in an unguarded moment, I disclosed the feelings of my heart. But from her I asked—I received nothing for hope to feed on. My fault was unpremeditated—nay, I may say, at variance with every prior resolution; I am about to atone for it, by banishing myself for ever from the country she inhabits. Will not sir Colin Macrimmon therefore forgive——”

“No!” returned the chieftain, with stern abruptness; “by your own confession are you convicted of the offence you seek to slur over and deny. Was there nothing reprehensible, think you, in a young female listening to a love-tale from the Lord knows who? was there nothing systematically deceptive in her concealing for a moment that I sheltered under my roof a guest who repaid confiding hospitality by the blackest treachery? In good truth, stranger,

it is the custom of the Gael to rate honour in man, and decorum in woman, differently from what you appear to do in the south. Go, go! you have escaped the gibbet, but your own words go nigh to prove you a very doubtful character."

Shame and anger flushed the pale face of Clifford at this harsh speech.—“Sir Colin,” said he, in an agitated voice, “I repent that I ever stretched forth my hand in reconciliation, since it is thus rudely rejected. The disparity in our years condemns me to bear, without retort, your severe censure, otherwise I might have sought to prove that a man born beyond the Tweed likes slighting expressions as little as he who has his birthplace north of the Grampians. This much, however, I beg leave to say; had our separation been marked by the faintest symptoms of cordiality and friendship, I should have held myself bound in honour to henceforth avoid Lillias Macara;



Macara; as it is, should we ever meet again, I shall boldly take what course my heart prompts.”

“And when you next meet you have my full permission,” returned sir Colin. “Now that we so thoroughly understand each other, suppose we make use of that sad word—*farewell!*”

Clifford felt irritated, and disdained reply. The chieftain lifted his hat with mock respect, as he turned away; and they parted, mutually displeased, and conscious that their differences were irreconcilable.

No sooner had he thus closed all correspondence with sir Colin Macrimmon, than Clifford found another, but more humble personage inviting his notice, with a countenance in which joy was portrayed to an almost-ludicrous degree; this was honest Donald Darroch, who, with glistening eyes and anxious look, earnestly sought to catch his glance. The Englishman had not forgot that  
the

the kind-hearted Highlander had unhesitatingly acquitted him of crime, at a time when proofs seemed strongest against him; he therefore replied to his greeting with marked condescension.

“It is Tonalld Tarroch tat pe ta happiest man tis tay in ta Glen More,” said the clansman, “and she pe only sorry tat hersel’ had no hand in setting her free. God’s plessing on ta judge, and on ta young shentlemen, Fasnacloich and maister Alister! Ta lady of Lochullin will pe plessing tem a hundred tousand times, when ta great goot news pe reaching Tun Rioman.”

“I fear, Donald,” said Clifford, in return, “the lady of Lochullin is in no case to feel joy on my account; if I am to put faith in what the oaths of several respectable men have this day attested, Miss Macara has lost her reason.”

“Hersel’ darna just pe saying tat ta chief pe sometimes wrong as well as ta doctors,” observed Donald, cautiously;  
“but

“but ta sweet lady will pe monny tay shewing more reason tan tem tat pe pretending to pe a great teal wiser, py her leave. God pe peside her always! it’s hersel’ tat has ta hard hearts and ta pad hearts to teal with.”

“Do you mean to infer that her senses are uninjured—that she is oppressed?” inquired Clifford, earnestly.

“She’ll no just pe swearing to tat,” answered Donald; “ta lady might have peen petter in her time, paith in prain and heart.”

“Is she confined to the castle?” questioned the Englishman.

“She’ll pe seldom leaving it now-a-tays,” was the reply; “put till ta time of ta trial came to pe near, she would sometimes pe walking to ta Fall of Smoke, and on ta craigs py ta loch, and in ta Mile of Darkness.”

“And will likely walk there again, now the trial is over,” observed Clifford.

“She canna pe sure,” returned the Highlander;

Highlander; “ put tere have peen more strange events happening in Glen Rioman.”

“ Donald,” said Clifford, after a short pause, during which he seemed revolving some project in his mind, “ can I place faith in you ?”

“ Tonalld Tarroch never proke faith,” replied the clansman, while a tinge of resentment flushed through the dark freckled skin of his face. “ Tat question may pe asked of ta Sassenach, put in ta country of ta Gael, py her leave, it pe never heard.”

“ Then I must entreat your pardon, Donald,” said Clifford; “ and in proof that I intended no insult, will confide in you without further hesitation. I have before heard you declare that you were strongly attached to him that is now in his grave; has not this regard descended to his sister?”

“ She would prove it py her pest plood,” answered Donald. “ Ta goot  
man’s

man's curse fall on ta false heart tat would tasert her !”

“ In that case I may speak fearlessly,” rejoined Clifford ; “ for, if averse to serving me, you will at least have the wisdom to keep secret aught tending to injure your lady. My mind misgives me that Miss Macara is harshly treated—that this story of her derangement is a falsity. To ascertain whether this is really the case, I must once more see her face to face ; and on you, Donald, I depend for assistance to bring about the interview.”

“ She'll pe aye ready to serve her lady's friend,” said Donald. “ What may pe wanted for her to do ?”

“ To carry a message to Miss Macara, settling when and where we are to meet,” returned Clifford ; “ at the Fall, on the cliffs overhanging the loch, or in the Mile of Darkness—anywhere she chooses to appoint.”

“ She'll pe taking ta road to Glen Rioman

Rioman in apout an hour," observed Donald, "and will pe glad to carry any message to ta lady from ta dead Lochullin's friend."

"And who bears you company, Donald?" inquired the Englishman.

"She rides py hersel'," was the answer; "ta chieftain, and Glen Eynort, and ta gillies, return ta morn py ta Glen More and Glen Morrison, and will pe doing without her."

"But is it not too late in the day to attempt reaching Ardgy without being benighted?" interrogated Clifford.

"She'll pe keeping ta hill-road py Ben Vhragie," replied the Highlander, "and rest ta darkest hours at ta shealing of Evan Beg Stronach. Hersel' would pe travelling ta heal night, to pe ta first to carry ta great goot news to ta lady of Lochullin, God save her!"

"Then I will bear you company," exclaimed Clifford. "Keep my purpose a secret, and in an hour hence I will  
meet



meet you at any place you think proper to mention."

"On ta prig tan," returned Donald, hurriedly. "And now she'll pe going, py your leave, for ta chieftain and Glen Eynort pe looking for her."

Clifford saw that this assertion was correct, and apprehending it might tend to the clansman's hurt were it suspected that he possessed his good wishes, he let him depart, and rejoined Tarleton and colonel Wriothsley. He was revolving in his mind the manner in which he should account for the journey he was planning, when the latter relieved him from his perplexity, by stating it was his intention to remain three days longer in Inverness; the others, he added, might do the same, and then, in his company, make their appearance at the regiment, which, notwithstanding their delay, would be easily overtaken, before their presence was absolutely requisite.

In consequence of this arrangement,

Clifford

Clifford had to explain himself only to Tarleton, and, though he found him decided in his disapprobation, finally vanquished his scruples. Remembering the danger he had so recently and miraculously escaped, that faithful friend could scarcely bring himself to countenance a measure which threatened again to involve him in difficulty; finding it impossible to dissuade, he entreated to be made his companion; but even this Clifford would not agree to, on the plea that one person ran less hazard of being detected than two, and that, in all probability, his humble colleague would refuse his co-operation on seeing a stranger enlisted in the cause.—“ Let me go alone, Tarleton,” were his words; “ and be assured that I shall not only keep out of jeopardy, but rejoin you, without fail, on the second day from the present. I pledge my honour that I will avoid Glen Eynort, and leave his punishment to a higher arm than that of man; but I cannot

not

not consent to quit Scotland without making an effort to ascertain whether the once-bright and comprehensive mind of Lillias Macara is darkened for ever. If I did so, it would not only embitter the future, but give birth to suspicions, which, sooner or later, and at whatever risk, I should be compelled to satisfy. It is better, therefore, I seek the elucidation now; that once obtained, guide me as you list."

Tarleton was silenced by this beseeching appeal, and, at the conclusion of the hour, saw the adventurer depart without displeasure, if not with his entire concurrence.

## CHAPTER V.



About, about, in reel and rout,  
The death-fires danced at night;  
The water, like a witch's oils,  
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

And some in dreams assured were  
Of the spirit that plagued us so;  
Nine fathom deep he had follow'd us  
From the land of mist and snow.

*Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner.*

DONALD was true to his appointment, and Clifford found him mounted and equipped for his journey. Little conversation passed until they were clear of the suburbs, and within the gorge of the great strath in whose bosom reposes the Firth of Beauly; Donald then alighted, and insisted that Clifford should take his place, exclaiming, in answer to the latter's refusal—"Noo, noo! she'll just  
pe

pe so goot as to put her leg over ta *ger-ran's* pack, and hersel' will pe travelling peside her more pleasantly tan she'll ride. God pless her! ta Highlandman would far sooner pe travelling afoot tan riding at oney time; a score or twa o' miles pe nothing for her to stride ower."

"And equally little to me, Donald," observed Clifford, "so I will walk; you are an old man, while my bones are yet green and suited for exercise; in short, I will not mount your horse."

"Ten she'll pe walking too," returned Donald; "Tonald Tarroch never yet sat in her saddle while a shentleman would pe afoot, and she'll no pe tisgracing her preeding at tis hour of ta tay. Tere now, Swanton," added he, speaking to the pony, "tak ta road afore her; she'll pe glad eneuch no toot at ta shentleman's peing pent on travelling like a *gille-ruidh*\*."

Swanton seemingly understood this address,

\* Running footman.

address, for he pricked up his ears, trotted on a few paces, and then taking the centre of the road, moved on with singular steadiness and docility. Clifford was completely vanquished by the Highlander's obstinacy, and a few minutes saw him established, for a time at least, in the seat the other had so determinedly relinquished.

"And noo," said Donald, as they proceeded onward, "she'll pe able for to climb ta rough scalp o' Ben Vhragie, and to reach ta end of ta shourney like a shentleman."

"And at what hour to-morrow may we calculate on seeing Dun Rimmon?" inquired Clifford.

"Apoot ta second hour after sunrise," answered Donald. "She'll pe travelling hard till ta moon sets, and ten pe halting for ta dark hours in Evan Beg's shealing, on ta side of Ben Vhragie; py ta skreigh o' tay she'll pe at ta road agen, and so pe at ta end of her shourney in goot time  
for



for her breakfast at Dun Rioman.—  
Aigh! aigh! yonder pe ta plack croon  
o' Ben Vhragie peering ower ta top of  
Craig Skooroora." He pointed to a lofty  
mountain in front, on the brow of which  
patches of snow lay unmelted, and strongly  
contrasted with the ebon hue of the  
heathy summit they dotted.

"I am afraid, Donald," said Clifford,  
after devoting a few minutes to a survey  
of Ben Vhragie, "it is too early in the  
season to cross the mountain; my anxiety  
to reach Glen Rimmon is great, but  
do not let me betray you into danger."

"Hoot! hoot!" returned Donald, "tin-  
na pe fearing for ta Gael among her ain  
hills; she'll pe crossing and crossing tat  
same Ben Vhragie in ta teepest drift in  
winter, and, so God keeps off ta mist,  
will pe safe seated py Evan Beg's fire  
pefore ta moon sets, as she said pefore.  
To pe sure she should no pe tempting  
ta wanderers of ta night; but ta goot

God tat made her will pe keeping tem away from her eyes."

Clifford was sufficiently acquainted with the superstitious creed of the Highlanders to recollect that they held it a tempting of Providence to travel in those dark hours, when the inhabitants of the grave are supposed to walk the earth; it pleased him to hear that preternatural interruption was the only danger he had to apprehend, and, with a thorough conviction that they should reach the shealing on the side of Ben Vhragie without accident, he bade adieu to the gleaming mirror-like surface of the Beaully Firth. In hopes that it would accelerate their progress, he prevailed on Donald to become the horseman occasionally; but, in the end, this was proved to have a contrary effect; the Highlander, with his bent knees and trotting pace, suited much better with the mountain-road than the erect and graceful-gaited Englishman;

lishman; and the consequence of this discovery was, that Swanton and the latter became inseparable.

By sunset the travellers were deeply embosomed in a mountainous track, apparently destitute of inhabitants; but Donald's thorough acquaintance with the path rendered this a matter of no moment. Ben Vhragie was still visible ahead, and, to the Highlander's no small concern, there began to settle on its summit a thin fleecy vapour, which he denominated the *nightcap*, and looked upon as the certain precursor of a dangerous fog. The moon, however, shewed an unclouded face, and as the light of day died away, myriads of bright stars shone out; so, on the whole, there seemed no great cause for apprehension in Clifford's opinion. But the misty bonnet of Ben Vhragie was not the only appearance that startled honest Donald; there gradually gathered a soft luminous splendour in the northwest quarter of the

G 2

firmament,

firmament, announcing that they were about to witness the phenomenon of the *Aurora Borealis*, or “merry dancers,” as he termed the vibrations of light, and Donald’s dismay was complete; Ben Vhragie, he averred, seemed determined to pull down his nightcap and go to sleep an hour too soon, and the veriest fool in the Highlands knew that the “streamers” invariably prognosticated wind and tempest, and often something worse, if people would look back as far as the “forty-five\*.”

From being amused by his companion’s observations, Clifford found himself called upon to behold one of the most magnificent sights he had ever seen the heavens present; at first but an undensed and luminous haze on the horizon, the coruscations rapidly increased and brightened, till, united in one vivid stream, they shot, like a brilliant girdle,  
across

\* The Highlanders affirm that the *Aurora Borealis* became remarkable only about the year 1745.

across the entire span of the starry vault, and then suddenly branched off to every point of the compass, in a multitude of various-coloured rays. As if this was only the opening of the pageant, the rays again concentrated, till they assumed the similitude of a colossal and jewel-studded crown, which dissolving in ruin as speedily as the girdle, similarly scattered its fragments over the great arch, and for a time the disunited parts wandered on the horizon like a mimic army, now charging each other in deep and threatening column, now broken into single squadrons, and retreating with flapping banners; nor did these restless hosts advance to battle without each displaying a distinct uniform—they varied in tint, from the palest yellow to the deepest tinge of fire, and latterly put on a livery of grave russet brown, in order, as it were, to render the conclusion more striking, when, bursting forth into one glorious

G 3

blaze,

blaze, a thousand glittering arrows darted towards the zenith. After this the coruscations momentarily became more feeble, and at length died away, leaving on the sky a deep brazen shade.

Donald beheld the heavens resume their usual aspect with reiterated avowals of joy and thankfulness, for to him these revellers of the night, familiar though they were, were as the phantoms of another world, on whose merry-making he held it sacrilege to gaze. As the last flashes faded, he announced that they had reached the base of Ben Vhragie; and its ascent was joyfully entered on, though, as Clifford suspected, the extinguishing of the northern lamp proved a misfortune rather than a blessing; the queen of night too began to frown on their pilgrimage, by veiling her mild face in a gloomy haze, notwithstanding the beseeching looks Donald occasionally bestowed on her, and eventually her place in the firmament came



came to be denoted merely by an undefined melancholy halo, which shed no light. The farther up the mountain they advanced, the more dense grew the atmosphere, the wind turned chill and biting, and those patches of snow which, in the moonbeams, had glittered and guided them like the twinkling of a far-off beacon, were seen no longer. Clifford had his own suspicions, but he kept them to himself; and Donald bore up manfully, till the obscurity became so great as scarcely to allow him to lift a foot in safety; then his apprehensions sought vent in words.—“God pe apoot her!” he exclaimed, “ta mist rolls down ta rocks like ta pig waves of ta sea tumbling into Loch Ruart! She doots sair she’ll pe pracking her shins pefore lang, or maype her neck, if she should pe stepping ower ta craigs of Skooroora. Tere now, Swanton,” added he, as the pony stumbled over some huge stones, “she would pe after playing ta shentle-

man a shappy trick, would no she, if hersel' was on her pack. Aigh! aigh! she pe always pelieving ta merry dancers poded no goot. Ochone! ochone! she fears ta mist will pe smoring poor travellers."

"The crags of Skooroora are more to be feared, Donald," observed Clifford. "Let us proceed with caution as far as we may, and, if possible, find out the shealing which you aver cannot be very distant; if that is impracticable, we have only to prepare for the worst, by taking shelter behind some rock; a few hours watching on the mountain will do neither harm."

"To pe sure, to pe sure," returned Donald—"hersel' kens pest; put, py her leave, maister Clifford, she pe pelieving tat ta first nicht she pe out of a prison her poor pody would pe liking a petter ped tan ta pare hard side of Ben Vhragie. Aigh! aigh! if she could pe finding Evan Beg's shealing, tere would  
pe

pe no danger of her wanting a ped; put, ochone! she canna pe seeing ta length of her plaid pefore her, and pesides, she's no just clear apoot peing on ta richt road. Pe leading ta way, Swanton, man," continued he, addressing the pony, which had for some time been left to its own guidance. "Fat ta tevil tose ta prute pe standing at? her nose pe no surely ower ta craig alreaty."

He advanced a few steps, in order to ascertain what impediment had occasioned the animal to make a sudden and obstinate halt, but the next moment retreated back on his companion, with a loud and fervent ejaculation in Gaelic—"Ta great goot God tefend her!" he exclaimed, in answer to Clifford's question of what had affrighted him, "tere pe a ghaist, as pig as ta *Sul-bein* of Assint\*, at ta shalt's head! Ochone! ochone!

G 5

she'll

\* *Sul-bein*, or Eye-hill, a mountain of picturesque form, better known to mariners navigating the Minch, as the Sugar-loaf.

she'll never be reaching Glen Rioman alive."

Not quite satisfied with this explanation, Clifford took the lead in his turn, and quickly came to discern a dark shadowy figure, motionless amid the rolling volumes of mist, and directly in the centre of the path; it was so undefined and spectre-like, that, for a moment, he fancied imagination had embodied it, and therefore hesitated to give utterance to the query that sprung to his lips—"May we not pass, friend?" said he, at length convinced that a human form was before him.

"Pass on," was the reply, while the figure flitted a few steps aside—"pass on, and the earn will find a feast to-morrow on the crags of Skooroora; three steps beyond where I stand are the precipices, and—death."

"God save her for a goot Christian!" exclaimed Donald, in a voice of thankfulness, and somewhat reassured as to  
the

the stranger's "questionable shape."—"Noo tat she has been preserving her life, and ta shentleman's life, she'll maybe shewing her ta way to ta shealing of Evan Beg."

"The mist has so bewildered us," said Clifford, "that we know not where we wander; I therefore most earnestly join in my companion's entreaties that you would endeavour to guide us to the shealing he mentions. But perhaps I am applying to one equally at a loss with ourselves?"

"Lost indeed!" returned the stranger, in a deep thrilling voice, which smote with painful familiarity on the Englishman's ear—"lost indeed! but not in the mists of Ben Vhragie. He whose glance is condemned to pierce into unmade graves walks not in darkness, though the mountain draws round him a dewy shroud. Ye come from fetters and shame, young wanderer, and ye come free and unblighted. Right, right; it is like the

spirit of a high-born race, to prefer a heather couch to a sheltered head. I will—I must guide you on your way; a power, against which there is no appeal, commands it. Yet did I dare to disobey, did I give way to the promptings of nature, the eagle of Skooroora should not be disappointed of his meal. Ninian! Ninian! sooner or later, the son of a Saxon girl will hunt us from the earth. Why was I told the dark tale, and called upon to forespeak Heaven's decree? But let us on, youth—the shealing is near. Tremble not, for that heart has yet to prove that there are wilder and more perilous scenes than a night fog on Ben Vhragie.”

Without giving time for a rejoinder, or displaying the least caution in his motions, though the sound of a roaring stream announced they were actually on the crags of Skooroora, the incomprehensible guide strode on with a hasty step. Afraid that he would vanish in  
the



the fog, Clifford followed with equal rapidity, while Donald, leading Swanton and muttering his many fears, brought up the rear. From the ejaculations of his superstitious companion Clifford speedily came to infer that they had each similarly identified, in their own minds, the extraordinary being they had trusted in, and, in a whisper, he inquired if it was not as he suspected?

“She’ll no just tak upon her to say,” replied Donald, in a faint voice, expressive of trepidation; “put, for certain sure, her speaking pe very like ta seer, Riach MacRyri, God save her! So pe as she’s richt, Tonald Tarroch would sooner pe having all ta ghaists in ta Highlands pefore her. Och! och! ta sights tat she will pe seeing pefore she pe clear of her! —ta tead fouk will pe seen walking on ta hillside—ta coffins will pe carrying past—ta tead men’s candles will pe plinking; and she’ll no swear tat ta purn  
of

of Skooroora pe not her ped at last.—  
Tere now !” he added, terror impelling  
him to elevate his voice as a pale flash  
of uncondensed lightning gleamed for a  
moment through the fog, and more dis-  
tinctly shewed the outline of their leader  
—“ did she no say tat ta tead candles  
would pe purning? Aigh ! aigh ! ta  
shealing pe ta pad place to find !”

“ It is yonder,” interposed the guide,  
as another stream of light glimmered  
dimly along the side of the mountain,  
and shewed a black mass at the base of  
a grey precipice, from which the fog was  
slowly departing. “ And, now that my  
bitter task is done, I leave ye. The home  
of Riach MacRyri is the wilderness and  
the rock ; his nourishment—misery, mi-  
sery !”

“ Stay,” exclaimed Clifford, as the  
stranger was flitting past him, the strong  
heath scarcely rustling beneath his tread,  
“ I have many questions to ask, and  
something

something to offer to a faithful guide. Accompany us to the shealing, and you shall be amply remunerated."

"Remunerated! remuneration for me!" shouted the seer, in his full piercing tones; "youth, that is not in man's gift, and in yours least of all; the wealth of the world could not lighten one care, nor the honours of kings give a moment's joy. There is a sight among those waves of mist that no eye, save mine, can see—no tongue, save mine, dare tell; and one glance on that ghastly crowd were sufficient to rend this heart, though my plaid were brooched with the diamond, and princes attending as my mates. Ay, look, look as ye list, but thank the Almighty that ye are not gifted; you see not the skinny arms and cold bleached faces that beckon on me; you see not a Macrimmon in his shroud, nor the dingy forms that surround yonder dying chief. Lay him low, children of the sun—let him rest in your own burning land—we want  
not

not such a fireflash to spread desolation among the mountains of the Gael—Macrimmon has heirs and chieftains at home. Ha! who are these that seek a colder grave, and have trusted in the billows? how proudly they foam round the prow of that gallant ship, and heave her onward! Woe, woe to MacRyri, when that vessel touches the shore of his nativity! Has hell no storms to bury her in the deep? Hark! the wind whistles amongst her strained cordage—but it is the voice of a friend. Wait, those flashing bolts may prove the messengers of wrath to her—of mercy to me. It is even so; and—and, pride of Macrimmon, is it thus ye fall? Youth—Saxon, whatever ye be, look if, amongst those gasping corpses, you can discern that of Glen Eynort's rival. Is it there? Ha! ha! ha!" The wretch fled, shrieking his fearful laugh, and was soon lost in the deep obscurity of the night.

During this frantic harangue, Donald's  
terror

terror had arrived at such a pitch as to occasion his prostration on the earth; and when Clifford had sufficiently recalled his own scattered thoughts to look after him, he found him, like a ground hog, burrowing with his snout in the damp heather. It required three calls and a gentle touch with the foot before he could be brought to resign his grovelling posture, and even then it was difficult to make him comprehend that the object of his alarm was gone.—“Ta goot God pe praised!” he ejaculated, as he rose and shook himself, “an’ aye pe keeping a’ honest people from getting sic a guide agen! Aigh! aigh! she has peen expecting never to see ta morn, and waiting, like a tying man, to hear if hersel’s wraith was to follow ta chief’s. Put where will Swanton pe, poor prute? She was ta frightened horse, God kens; and ta seer, py her leave, may have porrowed her, for want of a petter.”

“I rather suspect the seer has no hand  
in

in Swanton's disappearance," observed Clifford; "he trotted off when you laid yourself so snugly to rest, and I question if we find him till the day dawns. But from whence comes yonder light?" and he pointed to a flickering blaze at a short distance.

"Py ta pook itself!" exclaimed Donald, after a short but earnest scrutiny, "she pelieves it pe ta light of ta shealing! and tat Swanton, ta honest wise peast, has peen pringing Evan Beg Stornach to ta door. She'll pe travelling noo, py her leave, in case pe ta seer should pe coming pack agen, and pe seeking quarters alang wi' her."

Clifford made no opposition to this motion, and in a short time they reached the shealing. As Donald had surmised, Evan Beg, a dwarfish but sturdy mountaineer, stood at the door examining Swanton, while a young girl, seemingly his daughter, waited on him with a torch of blazing bogwood. Donald hailed his  
countryman



countryman in his mother-tongue, and, from the gestures rather than the words made use of in return, the Englishman inferred they were welcomed with cordiality. Without delay he was ushered into the dwelling, and, though neither husband, wife, nor daughter, spoke a word of English, they speedily contrived to inform him that every accommodation it afforded was at his command. A more miserable abode could scarcely be imagined — Poverty seemed to have made it her favourite place of residence, and, as he had anticipated, Clifford found he had no alternative but to pass the night by the fire. True it was that the best bed in the bothy was tendered through the medium of Donald, but against accepting it there were many objections, notwithstanding the pain his refusal evidently inflicted. Regarding his food he was not equally fastidious, for travelling had put a keen edge on his appetite. Eggs, butter, oat cakes, and

and usquebaugh, were set before him; while for Donald a plenteous dish of porridge was prepared, to season which he occasionally added a spoonful of the water of life; in short, both did all manner of justice to the repast. When it ended, the females betook themselves to rest in the remote end of the hut, which was separated from the public apartment by a few boards rudely joined together, and Clifford stretched himself on a bench near to the fire. Donald and his host were less somniferously inclined; they had so much to say to each other that drowsiness was kept at a distance; and throughout the night, Clifford, in the lapses of his broken sleep, was condemned to hear the low nasal drawl of the Gaelic tongue.

Donald was astir with the dawn, as was every other inhabitant of the shealing; and before they were permitted to depart, the travellers had to breakfast on viands similar to those on which they had

had made their supper overnight; a *deoch n' dhorish*\*, to keep the air of the morning from doing them harm, was also strongly recommended, and, as far as Donald was concerned, the advice conscientiously followed. Though griping penury was perceptible in every corner of his dwelling, the Englishman found it a matter of extreme difficulty to prevail on Evan Beg to accept of any recompence for his hospitality; in adjusting this point, how strongly did memory contrast the disinterested and honourable pride of the Highlander with the narrow and avaricious dispositions he had often seen manifested by the peasantry of more civilized and far richer countries!

No sooner had they left the shealing of Ben Vhragie, than Clifford entered on the subject of their rencounter with the seer; but, in reply to his many questions,

\* *Deoch n' dhorish*—literally, a drink at the door—a parting glass.

tions, Donald piled together a mass of marvellous matter, from which he could extract nothing worthy of remark, and little entitled to credence. In part, his narration went to corroborate the sketch Miss Macara had formerly given of Mac Ryri. He had been well educated, or, in Donald's words, had got more learning than he well knew how to manage, and had, for a series of years, been parochial schoolmaster of the parish in which lay Glen Eynort's hereditary estate. The death of his only child, and, some years after, that of his wife, added to a taint, supposed to be in his family, eventually unhinged his mind; he became melancholy, and unfit for the duties of a teacher—deserted his home, and, in consequence of lonely wandering, was quickly suspected to be afflicted with the “gifted eye.” Whether it was attachment to Glen Eynort, who paid him great respect as his fosterfather, or partiality for the place of his birth, Donald could not affirm,

affirm, but so it was that, from the time the former removed to Dun Rimmon, Riach Mac Ryri had constantly haunted its neighbourhood, seeking no home but the rocks, no bed but the heather, and no food but the morsel given in charity. This was the sum of Donald's credible information, and Clifford was pleased to find that it upheld him in the belief that the seer was neither more nor less than an unhappy maniac, who, to his own misery, had fancied himself endued with the spirit of prophecy. His reason for feeling anxious to establish this, arose from a dread that had taken possession of his mind relative to the connexion subsisting between this man and Glen Eynort. He remembered that the first time he had set eyes on him was immediately preceding Lochullin's death, and that then he had uttered words portending evil; next came under review the narration Tarleton had given of his adventure at the Giant's Cairn, from which  
it

it appeared the seer had again made him, in a certain measure, the subject of his prophecies; so that, when to these circumstances he added the mysterious harangue on the side of Ben Vhragie, it was in no wise astonishing he came to feel perplexed and anxious. The only rational way of accounting for either of the above occurrences, was by setting them down to the score of insanity, the ravings of which, at all times, bear a stamp of foresight and sublimity. Mac Ryri, probably from Glen Eynort himself, had acquired a superficial knowledge of what was passing, and this, blended with the fancies of a disordered brain, had possibly startled Tartleton. He found it less easy to account for the means by which the seer had so instantaneously recognized himself in the obscurity of the night, and at a moment when it was more likely he should suppose him in a prison; but even this he eventually elucidated to his satisfaction.

Donald,



Donald, he recollected, had alluded to his liberation, and called him by his name but the moment before they encountered Mac Ryri, and his words falling on the keen ear of madness, had no doubt quickly found a solution, and brought on the frantic fit that succeeded. Completely reasoned out of his perplexity by this mental investigation, he dismissed the seer from his mind, and prepared to attend to matters of deeper interest.

As Donald had prognosticated, Glen Rimmon lay stretched at their feet several hours before noon, and their first view of it was from a lofty ridge, from which, by a few bounds, they might have dropped into its bosom. Clifford gazed upon the scene with those marvellous thoughts which more or less affect every man who notes the mutability of earthly fortune; when he last withdrew his eyes from that valley, it was under the impression that they were

withdrawn for ever, and that a disgraceful death and a blighted memory were to be his lot. But the cloud had blown over, and he was again free, unstigmatized, and looking on Glen Rimmon. In that moment he felt his heart bound light and thankfully in his breast.—“On some other shore of the world, in some distant year, happiness, such as mortal may enjoy, is yet reserved for me,” he mentally ejaculated. His glance fell on the grey turrets of the castle as the hope arose, and with that glance it was doomed to perish.

In order to facilitate his interview with Miss Macara, he had, prior to leaving Evan Beg’s habitation, traced with a pencil, on the envelope of a letter, a few words expressive of his uncontrollable anxiety to bid her adieu ; he took no heed of his miraculous acquittal, well knowing that Donald would speedily promulgate the news, and what else he could have wished to say there was no possibility

possibility of compressing into such an epistle; where or when the meeting was to take place, he left entirely to herself, but when he dispatched his messenger, he intimated that he would await his return at the Fall of Smoke. He remained stationary on the ridge until Donald and Swanton were buried in the coppice-wood at its base, and then, by traversing its summit, proceeded towards the cataract. To reach this undiscovered was a matter of trivial difficulty; his commanding situation gave him a full view of the whole track he had to pursue, and at the same time removed him so far from the inhabitants of the valley, as to render it a very improbable circumstance that he would be particularly remarked, or by accident encounter any of the Clan Rimmon; a solitary shepherd was the only person his watchful eye detected on the ridge, but he kept so far aloof as to create no apprehension; and in due time he found himself bend-

ing over the murky basin of the cataract. For three long anxious hours did Clifford crouch among the brushwood overhanging the fall, hope and fear alternately obtaining precedence in his breast; every rustle in the coppice made the blood flow with sudden revulsion to his heart—every low moan of the breeze made him start to his feet, from an idea that it was Donald's whistle. At length the welcome sound thrilled on his ear in reality, and he darted from his hiding-place. Donald was alone, but he presented a letter, and Clifford hastily ran his eyes over the following lines:—

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“ In the same moment which has relieved her mind from indescribable agony, has Lillias Macara received the note written by her brother's friend. She must not, dare not see him; but that this denial may inflict the less pain, she hesitates not to declare that compulsion

sion only could have prevented her from appearing in his defence at the bar of justice. Thanks be to Heaven! without her aid the machinations of the wicked have been foiled, and the innocent set free. Let her friend fly the moment these lines are read, for not till the breadth of an ocean is between him and his enemy can she know peace. There was a time when she imagined her pen could never be brought to trace so harsh an injunction; but were she to disobey the whisperings of principle, she feels assured the dark days of her life would not yet have closed. She knows too well the vindictive, the deep, deadly enmity some breasts can nourish, not to shudder for the safety of those she values. God be with her friend, in whatever land he sojourns, and replace, with hearts as kind, those it becomes him now to part with for ever!"

Clifford gazed vacantly on the writing for a considerable time after he had finished the perusal, but his eyes saw not the characters on which he appeared to look. Suddenly he roused himself from the thorough stagnation of thought disappointment had occasioned; he grasped Donald's rough hand with a tight momentary pressure, and exclaiming, as he dropped it—"Bless her—you—all!" darted into the forest of black firs on the steep above. Donald called loudly on him to return and receive back the money he had left in his palm, but the echoes of the adjacent rocks were his only answer—Clifford was gone.



CHAPTER VI.  
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The wanderer was alone, as heretofore;
The beings which surrounded him were gone,
Or were at war with him.

BYRON.

CLIFFORD regained Inverness early on the following day; he had passed the night in a hut nowise superior to the residence of Evan Beg, but his mind was not in a state to make him fastidious as to where he laid his head. Tarleton hailed his return with openly-expressed satisfaction, and at the same time considerably refrained from prying into the circumstances of his excursion, for the sadness and resignation that sat impressed on his countenance too plainly told that fatigue and disappointment were the coin in which he had been paid. The stirring scenes in which he

was about to mingle promised to administer the most infallible remedy for a depressed mind, and he was left to its remote but certain operation, instead of being persecuted by interrogatories, which only irritate and keep alive the remembrance of the past, or deluged with advice, which, if not actually detrimental, frequently proves far from sanative.

Colonel Wriothsley having perforce brought his friendly engagements in the Highlands to a close, at length gave the signal for departure, and Clifford bade the hills of the North what he firmly believed to be an everlasting farewell. This was not done without pain, for, though holding them as imperishable remembrances of his temporary degradation, they were still the hills of that country which was the home of Lillias Macara—which contained her brother's grave, and, for aught he knew, might be the natal soil of a father, of whose history his knowledge was so vexatiously

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ly imperfect. The black and mighty Ben Wyvis, towering like a giant above the intervening eminences of *Elan-du*, was the last familiar landmark in the country of the Gael on which his parting-glance reposed; when that lofty summit was hidden by the wood-crowned heights in the vicinity of Elgin, he leaned back in the chaise in which they were traversing the sandy but fertile plains of Morayshire, and gave the scenery around no further attention.

As they travelled with expedition, the regiment was quickly overtaken, and Clifford received from his brother-officers a reception as ostensibly kind as it was possible for men to give; it was doubtless much in his favour that he still retained the countenance of colonel Wriothesley, yet, setting that aside, it is to be hoped that sincere, though not so loudly-expressed congratulations, would have awaited him. It must be confessed, however, that a military man is not slow

in discovering a source of comfort when a comrade, who has the start in seniority, is swept out of the way, whether by misfortune or by death; from the first day he eats his dinner in a mess-room, he is accustomed to think—"In so many years hence I may sit here colonel-commandant; but before that happiness can be mine, three-fourths of these generous-hearted fellows must be under the sod." The idea pains at the moment, but from frequent recurrence it ceases to afflict; and finally the veteran comes to watch the progress of death with perfect apathy, starting only when he finds himself caught within the sweep of the exterminating scythe. That young ensign was harshly dealt with, who, as the story goes, was sent to *Coventry* by his brother-officers, for having, while on foreign service, given as a toast—"A bloody war and a sickly season!" his sole crime was having more candour in his composition than fell to the share of his judges, for
he

he merely uttered what had, at one period or other, been the sentiments of all.

It is not intended to follow Clifford and his compatriots through the perils they subsequently encountered, or over the bloody fields it was their fortune to wade; suffice it to say, that the former behaved with credit to himself and honour to his country, during the years that elapsed before he again saw her "sea-beaten shore," not only in Portugal and Spain, but also in Canada, to which remote province his corps was ordered, after assisting to drive beyond the Pyrenees the marauding troops of Napoleon. Before crossing the Atlantic, he obtained the rank of captain, as did his friend Tarleton; and the hope of future advancement was by no means speculative, when the sudden termination of the Transatlantic contest gave it a death-blow. It was resuscitated for a short space by the ex-emperor's return from Elba, and resumption of the throne of France;

but the blaze that that event rekindled was transient in proportion to its fury, and, quenched in the blood of thousands, expired at Waterloo. The battalion the friends belonged to was ordered home to be disbanded; and, before the peace was a year old, they found themselves on half-pay, and at liberty to direct their steps and employ their time where and how they chose.

So long as he was plunged in the stir and turmoil of a military life, Clifford seldom detected himself brooding over the past, or desponding when he looked to the future; but the case altered when it became necessary to separate from his brethren in arms, and launch into the world, like a ship at sea without a port to steer to. Upwards of six years had elapsed from the time of his leaving Scotland, and during that period he had remained totally ignorant of what had befallen Lillias Macara; yet years had rolled over, and oceans divided in vain,
for

for still he continued to remember her as the first and only love of his youth. It has been remarked, that the heart, when disappointed in one instance, is the more liable to make a second adoption, in order to fill the painful vacuum thereby occasioned; but perhaps this observation holds good only where affection has not been reciprocal—at all events, it was not applicable to Clifford; the worth of Lillias had stole unwittingly on his senses, and it could scarcely be said that hope ever blended with his regard; yet he had more than once inferred that his homage was not offensive; and, fortified by that bare supposition, he ever afterwards noted female excellence with the eye of one whose heart can make no second selection. Six years, it is true, had served to make the “lady of his love” little other than a being of his own creation—a phantom of the brain, to which he gave the name of her after whose similitude imagination had fashioned it;

yet

yet still he shrunk from withdrawing his fealty from that dim but lovely shade, though she who wrought his inconstancy might prove the fairest and best the world could boast of.

In the midst of gloomy cogitations, brought on by the consciousness that separation from the companions of his dangers had left him a solitary "weed on the ocean," the idea of revisiting the Highlands, and inquiring after the fate of Lillias Macara, presented itself; it offered a pursuit sufficiently interesting to give a stimulus to his mental faculties, which were in danger of stagnating, and without delay he turned his face to the North. In all probability, the intentions with which he started would have been followed out to the uttermost, had not a paragraph in a Scotch newspaper, which accidentally fell into his hands, overturned them in a moment; it went to state that Ninian Macrimmon, of Glen Ey-nort, had lost an only child, a boy, who, had

had he survived, would eventually have inherited, in addition to his paternal estate, the properties of Glen Rimmon and Lochullin. Clifford required no more to check his progress, for he had here indubitable proofs that Lillias was either the bride of the tomb or of Glen Eynort, and, in the latter case, his heart added, of her brother's murderer. In that moment he would have derived comfort from having it confirmed that, only by her death and his subsequent marriage with her sister, had his rival gained possession of the property; it was less shocking to think she had gone down to the grave in youth and loveliness, than that she was destined to wither and pine under the blighting glance of one in every way so calculated to sadden her after-life. Be it as it might, however, this paragraph convinced him that the Highlands were equally as desolate as any other part of the world he might turn to; and though Cheviot was
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in view, he experienced no further desire to cross the border.—“ But I will go visit Bilton and my old cross uncle,” said he, mentally ; “ now that I am so near him, it would have a decidedly-ungrateful look were I to pass without inquiring after his health, thankless as may be the office. Possibly he may be better inclined towards me than when I last paid my respects, and more communicative regarding those parents of whom I know so little. If he is unchanged, no matter ; I will soothe my mind by passing a few days in Coulson’s society, and when these are at an end, go wander on the Continent for a few years, and learn if there is any pleasure in a pilgrim’s life.”

Regulating his motions in accordance with this resolution, he alighted from the mail in which he travelled, at the junction of the cross-road leading to Bilton with the highway. An idle boy, who chanced to be near the place where
he

he was set down, readily undertook, for a due recompence, to carry his portmanteau; and thus attended, he proceeded on foot towards the village. By the way it occurred to him that it might be advisable to make some inquiries after his uncle before presenting himself at his door; he therefore asked his ragged porter if Mr. Clifford, of Bilton Grange, was still alive?

"A kenna," answered the lad, in a tone indicative of indifference as to how it behoved him to frame his reply.

"Then you are not acquainted in Bilton?" said Clifford.

"Ees, ees, I am," returned the other; "I knows every man and mother's son of un, from oald parson Blowsy the curate, to Jack Stiles the ostler at the Crown. He's a rare boy, Jack Stiles."

"And if your acquaintance is so extensive," said Clifford, "how comes it that you are so ignorant regarding the owner of the Grange?"

"Because

“ Because u’s house is always cloased up loik a thief’s hole,” replied the boy ; “ and because u’s feace has na been seen in Bilton since his oald twoad of a house-keeper, mistress Buffet, died. Beest thou going to the Grange, sir ? ”

“ What may be your reason for asking the question ? ” inquired Clifford, somewhat displeased at the lad’s obtrusiveness, and heaving a sigh to the memory of the departed housekeeper.

“ Because,” returned the other, “ I’s thinking thee’ll be main glad to change quarters to the Crown before the night comes on ; the oald badger is not to be smoaked out of u’s hole by the best gentleman in Northumberland. U’s the rarest scrub in the county ; and Jack Stiles, whoa’s a prince in comparison, swears he woad sweep hell for a farthing. The devil choak un with the worth of it, say I ! ”

“ You are an impertinent oaf,” said Clifford, nettled at hearing his kinsman abused,

abused, though conscious he deserved it; “and, take my word for it, your back will, sooner or later, pay the penalty, if you continue thus to give undue liberty to your tongue.”

“By gum then,” retorted the incorrigible, “if it be’s for speaking my moind of oald John Clifford, he that canes me was na born in Bilton! Lord luve your honour! the youngest wean in the village thinks it sport to huzza the oald curmudgeon the minute u sets u’s nose over his own gate. An oaf, for speaking my moind of measter Gripy! Zounds! how main ignorant some folks are!”

Clifford perceived he had the worst side of the argument, and therefore contented himself with desiring the young vagabond to be silent, as they were entering the village. The Grange stood at the farther extremity, and the whole street had consequently to be traversed; yet this was done without any of the
idle

idle gazers, lounging under the eaves of the cottages, recognizing, in the manly sun-tanned stranger, the pale-faced, broken-spirited nephew of the penurious Clifford. This was exactly as the young man desired; he had no juvenile friends to visit, and, provided his uncle was not inclined to demean himself kindly, intended to leave Bilton with as little notoriety as he entered it.

Clifford never remembered the Grange otherwise than as in a state of decay, yet he was scarcely prepared for the dilapidations six years had served to produce; the wall that encompassed the court and garden presented breaches in every quarter, which, in the fruit season, were regularly stormed by parties of young marauders, who looked upon robbing the miser's orchard as a much more agreeable pastime than conning their catechism or Lindley Murray; the roof displayed numberless chasms, in consequence of displaced or broken tiles, and
from

from these peeped forth the offspring of a colony of pigeons, which had wisely emigrated from a neighbouring dovecot, on finding it over-populated; the small antique windows were all more or less damaged, but the weather was excluded by boards supplying the place of the fractured panes—a substitute which answered the purpose of giving the edifice a melancholy and uninhabited look.

For several minutes Clifford stood gazing on the dilapidated pile, half-inclined to yield to the belief that it was totally deserted. The varlet who carried his portmanteau evidently enjoyed the perplexity he saw depicted in his face, and unwilling that he should longer remain a spy on his actions, he relieved him of his burthen at the gate, and, as he paid him for his trouble, bade him begone, in a voice that warned the youngster not to wait for a second dismissal. The rogue grinned significantly, eyed the money

money with a self-satisfied air, and decamped.

So still and lifeless appeared all around and within the building, that, though no longer annoyed by the impudent leer of his unmannerly porter, it was some time before Clifford could summon resolution to invade its solitude. As he slowly pushed aside the ruined gate, he remarked that the court-yard was overgrown with luxuriant grass, and that, on the very threshold of the edifice, sat the sign of desolation in the form of lofty untrodden weeds. As each successive symptom of desertion forced itself on his notice, he was suddenly struck with the idea that his uncle had paid the debt of nature, and was at that moment lying, a putrid unburied corse, within his own dwelling. Spurred on to action by this supposition, he grasped the mutilated knocker, and sounded a loud reiterated peal. In a state of the
most

most anxious suspense he awaited the result of his application, but no internal noise gave intimation that aught living heard it but himself. Again he gave the door a thundering salute, and, a few seconds after, imagined he heard footsteps stealing along the passage; but as these quickly died away without being followed by any decisive result, his perplexity augmented. Yielding to the conviction that it was useless to wage war with the knocker, he bethought himself of procuring assistance to force the door; but, on reflection, this plan was rejected, as calculated to give mortal offence to his uncle, should he be still in existence, and a resolution to quietly seek an entrance by some other avenue adopted in its stead. With this intent he leisurely circumambulated the building, and, while so employed, recalled to mind that, in his boyish days, he had more than once ascended to an elevated window in the western gable,
by

by making a ladder of a fine pear-tree that nearly covered its whole surface. The tree was still there, more calculated than ever for such a purpose; and with a beating heart he clambered up the face of the wall till he reached the window. As he anticipated, it was but slightly secured, probably from an idea that its elevation precluded all risk of intruders finding it accessible; and with very little difficulty Clifford crept into the small attic-room which, in former times, had been his own apartment.

For a few minutes he felt something like awe pervade his frame, at finding he had gained admission into the house of his kinsman like the midnight thief, and the sensation was not the more easily overcome by observing that little or no alteration had taken place in the room since he had been its occupant; in one corner stood the small bed he had slept in, in another the fishing-rod with which he had first tried his skill at angling;

angling; and on the whitewashed wall he recognized numberless extraordinary figures, biped and quadruped, all of which his hand had traced. It was evident that the dormitory was now, and had for a long time been deserted; for, in addition to the familiar arrangement of the furniture, the floor was covered with a thick carpeting of dust, on which no human foot had recently stamped its impression; Clifford saw in this a confirmation of his suspicions, and, anxious to put an end to his suspense, lifted the latch of the door, and let himself into the passage beyond.

This passage extended the whole length of the building, and a number of apartments, similar to that by which he had gained entrance, opened into it; but inferring, from what he remembered of his uncle's habits, that he would find him on the ground-floor, no time was wasted in their examination. Cautiously and without noise he piloted his way down the

dark stair till he reached the second story, where the obscurity became so deep, owing to the window which was intended to light the staircase being completely barricadoed, that for a moment he hesitated whether he should proceed; in that pause his ear caught the sound of a door creaking on its hinges, as if on the floor below, and he recommenced his descent. At the bottom of the last flight of steps he again halted to listen, but all was still as death—the very palpitations of his heart were audible, the silence was so profound. The stair had landed him in a long narrow lobby, forming the vestibule of the house, from which branched off two passages still more contracted, one to the right and the other to the left; the first of these it was necessary to follow, as the room in which the miser had formerly slept, and, as report said, kept his strong-box, opened into it. Clifford crept forward with a trembling step; he mechanically grasped the latch

of

of the door, lifted it, and, with something of desperate anxiety, pushed it back; a loud jingling crash succeeded, and a cry, between a shriek and a fierce halloo, rung through the edifice. Though greatly intimidated, Clifford still persisted in his first intention of entering the apartment, when, by the dim light that streamed from its strongly-grated and half-blocked-up window, he discerned that he was opposed by an ancient figure armed with a large bell-mouthed blunderbuss. —“Fly, robber! villain! miscreant!” the sentinel exclaimed—“fly! or your life is not worth a stiver; my blunderbuss is loaded to the muzzle, so another step sees you a dead man.”

Astounded by this threatening salutation, Clifford deemed it advisable to retreat; he therefore half-reclosed the door, and held parley behind it.—“I am neither robber, villain, nor miscreant,” said he, resolutely, “and, however I may have entered this house, cherish

intents friendly to the occupant. John Clifford was formerly that person, and it is to inquire after his welfare that I am now here."

"Very likely, very likely indeed," observed the person within, whom, by his voice, he speedily recognized to be his uncle; "every one is mighty anxious to know the day, hour, and minute, poor old John Clifford is to be given to the worms—and all for sheer love, no doubt—all from respect, esteem, charity, and what not. Pray, friend, what may your name be when you are at home? I should like to know *who* has been so very kind and disinterested as to turn housebreaker, and hazard getting his neck stretched, merely to inquire after the welfare of old John Clifford."

"Nay," returned Clifford, cautiously reopening the door till he could partly discern the outline of the miser's figure, "this is a truly-uncharitable construction to put upon the visit of a relative,
who,

who, notwithstanding all your harshness, is still desirous of courting your amity. It is your discarded but affectionate nephew, Charles Clifford, who solicits pardon for having, by stealth, entered your house. After vainly seeking admission in the usual way, I began to apprehend that some misfortune had happened you—that you were perhaps drawing your last breath, unseen and without assistance; I therefore hesitated not to avail myself of the only avenue I found accessible.”

“ So, so! a very kinsmanlike way of acting, I dare say!” observed the uncle. “ I am perfectly sensible it demands my gratitude, and, in proof, beg leave to warn my affectionate nephew not to carry his kindness over the threshold of this apartment, if he does not incline to be on terms of familiarity and amity with my good friend, the blunderbuss. I give him full credit for his humane intents, and doubt not but, had he found

me, as he anticipated, drawing my last breath, unseen and without assistance, he would have made a merit of relieving me from all my sufferings as speedily as a squeeze on my windpipe could effect it. I am quite satisfied that he entered my house with the best intentions, and take the manner of his so doing as guarantee that he is a much better man than his neighbours! Let him remove to the lobby, and I will lose no time in more fully thanking him."

The door was rudely closed at the conclusion of this ironical speech, and Clifford obediently retired to the lobby, regretting that he had persisted in following out an adventure by which he gained nothing but abuse. The faint tinkling of coin that succeeded his retreat, informed him that he had intruded on the miser's privacy at a moment when he was indulging himself with a sight of his hoarded gold, and well was he aware that he could not have chosen a more unpropitious

unpropitious time. From the reception given him, and the bitter irony with which his professions had been answered, he inferred that his stay was to be short, and on that account prepared to deport himself with calmness during the impending interview.

Upwards of ten minutes elapsed before the miser reappeared, and before their expiry his nephew had become heartily sick of pacing the damp dusty lobby, and most anxious to return to the pure air of heaven. At length the door of the forbidden apartment slowly unclosed, and the head of the old man was protruded, in order to ascertain if he might slip out without giving opportunity for any plunderer to slip in; assured that the coast was clear, he hastily darted out, slammed the door after him, and expeditiously locked it; the key was then secured in his breast, and still grasping the blunderbuss, he advanced towards his visitor.

In his kinsman's person Clifford remarked scarcely any change—perhaps the lines of his face had acquired more rigidity and sharpness, and the twinkle of his eye a more anxious cast, but, in other respects, he looked the same cross penurious wretch of former days; he had the same creeping gait—wore the same antique coat, with spreading skirts, plaited waist, and buttons as large as crown-pieces; on his head was stuck an old Welch wig, which his nephew had cause to remember as having brought down on him severe chastisement, in consequence of a young terrier, kept by stealth, having broken loose, found its way into the sacred chamber, and made free to purloin, and carry off to its own dormitory, this comfortable covering of the miser's scalp; something intended for spectacles sat on his nose, for as the glass of one eye was completely demolished, and the other blemished by a crack, it was morally impossible they could

could be of any use; in short, his *tout ensemble* singularly agreed with the character he bore and the desolate state of his habitation.

“And now, young scapegrace!” said he, elevating the mutilated spectacles, in order that his glance might rest without interruption on his nephew’s face, “bolster up your business as quickly as you can, and be off. Have you lost a limb in the wars, and come to quarter your idle carcase on old John Clifford? or are you anxious to shew off before his face the proficiency you have acquired in plundering honest men, cutting helpless people’s throats, and such like soldier’s devilry?”

“I have lost neither limb nor honesty in the wars,” answered Clifford, with asperity, “and, thanks be to my country, see no prospect of proving burthensome to any one. As I stated before, my only motive for revisiting Bilton Grange was to inquire after your welfare, and, I may

add, to learn if any circumstances relative to my parents have come to light since our last interview. Had my application for admission received due attention, I had never made my way surreptitiously into your house."

"Very possible, very possible indeed," retorted the old man, with that taunting acrimony for which he had always been remarkable; "I have no doubt but your motives were very good, in your own opinion; I dare say you were excessively troubled about the fate of old John Clifford—you imagined he might be dying, dead, and you not near enough to make a grapple at his little property. But no, I will not injure you so much as to affirm you were actuated by mercenary considerations; you never thought who was to inherit Bilton Grange, but were all disinterestedness and duty. Well, well, I am vastly obligated—my debt of gratitude weighs me to the earth."

"This irony answers no good purpose, sir,"

“sir,” said his nephew, impatiently; “I would gladly end this unpleasant conference.”

“Not before I make due return for your kind inquiries,” resumed John.

“Take a few words of solid advice in lieu, young blade—they may turn out more wholesome counsel in your present speculations. Do not be building castles in the air with my property; I have nothing to leave—nay, am literally a beggar; but, had I thousands, you should not pocket a farthing. Ay, ay, you may look blank, but it is even as I say—not a guinea laid by for a rainy day—the Grange mortgaged to its full value; in short, the bad times, brought on by heavy taxation, have ruined me, and I must die a beggar.”

His auditor did look blank at this declaration, but not from disappointment.

—“I certainly did not expect, sir,” said he, “to hear you, whom the world calls so rich, complaining of poverty; but

since the assertion comes from your own lips, I am not authorized to deny it credence. I have not amassed a fortune in my wanderings, but have acquired sufficient to make me comfortable in a humble way. The expence and trouble you were at in rearing and educating me are not forgot, and now seems the fittest time to shew my sense of past obligation. Suppose that, for the future, you take up your abode with me—or rather, I with you; I have no home of my own at present, and may as well, for a time, make the Grange my place of residence, as go rambling round the world; a little money, carefully expended, will soon render the house tenable—a servant or two suffice, and——”

“And,” added the miser, mimicking him, and evidently distrusting every word he uttered, “a very cheap coffin serve the purpose of John Clifford, when he kicks the bucket. Come, come, young cheat-the-rope! you set your gin with
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some ingenuity, but I am too old a sparrow to be caught with chaff. It tells mighty well that, from pure love and affection, a reformed prodigal would gladly take up his residence and share his crust with his poor relation! But I am not so easily choused with a few empty words. You would never presume, I suppose, to look into chest or drawer when I died, nor feel the least desire to examine paper or parchment; no, no, it would all proceed from sheer disinterestedness and regard to your uncle that you carefully expended a little money in repairing his house, hired a servant or two, *etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.*"

"I have done," said Clifford, who saw that his poverty was mere pretence; "my intrusion deserves this treatment, and the relative situations in which we stand compels submission, otherwise—"

"I am perfectly aware of the placid, kindhearted gentleman I have to deal with,"

with," interrupted the uncle, "and feel truly grateful for the forbearance he manifests, in not putting a pistol to my head to satisfy his injured honour. But get you gone as quickly as you may. God forbid that I should be the means of detaining such a powder-mouthed chap from making his fortune on the highway! I had enough of you, the moment you received a licence to kill and maim, plunder and destroy."

"And have I nothing to learn of my parents?" inquired the young man; "tell me but my father's name, and whether I have a legitimate right to claim it, and we meet no more on this side eternity."

"You will find all the information I can give in this paper," was the miser's reply, as he pulled from his pocket a soiled and crumpled fragment. "I discovered it about six months ago in an old chest, and have carried it in my pocket ever since, in order that it might be the easier delivered, should you re-
appear;

appear; it is merely a foolish song, written by your worthy father, I suppose, as his name is attached to it. Had I thought you would ever be so silly as to pry into the matter, I would have preserved more of your mother's papers; but, in good truth, I conceived they were best out of the way, and so made use of them as fuel, when coals were scarce. As to your legitimacy, I know nothing of the matter; yet I feel fully satisfied in my own mind that the worthless Scot had never so much grace given him as to make your mother an honest woman. But you need not examine the paper here—it may amuse you over a jug of porter at the Crown.”

“Must I quit the house as I entered it?” inquired Clifford, anxious to depart, and looking significantly at the double-locked door, in which no key was visible.

“And how might that be?” asked the miser, pricking up his ears. “I should like

like to be made acquainted with the whole secret of the enterprise, in order to guard against future invasion."

"It is soon told," was the answer. "On reaching your inhospitable door, I made due and reiterated application for admission by using the knocker, but without effect; fearing, as I have before stated, that you were indisposed and unable to answer, I scrambled up to the window of my old apartment by means of the pear-tree on the gable, and from thence found my way down stairs to your presence. As egress, however, by the same route, may be more difficult, and perhaps subject me to unpleasant observation from the inhabitants of the village, I would rather prefer an easier mode, and depart by the door."

"As speedily as your feet can carry you, ye limb of the devil!" vociferated the covetous wretch, in the utmost trepidation, as he drew a rusty key from his pocket and fitted it in the lock—

"get

“get ye gone, and never, never look me in the face again; my pear-tree broken—ruined!—the gable-window pointed out as a thoroughfare for robbers and murderers! Thank your stars, young gallows bird! that I have sufficient command over myself to refrain from blowing out your brains where you stand. There, there,” and he pushed him over the threshold with one hand, while he drew back the door with the other, “take to flight as swiftly as you may; for, by my soul! if I find you prowling about my premises hereafter, I shall do you the friendly action of getting you a snug lodging in the jail of Alnwick. I am told you ran a risk of having your neck stretched in Scotland some years ago, and only escaped by something bordering on a miracle; but do not presume on your good fortune too often; take my advice and mend your manners, or the gibbet will claim its own at last.”

The

The door was closed with violence as the concluding words were aspirated, the key turned swiftly round in the lock, and Clifford stood at liberty, and alone, in the court of the inhospitable mansion. Neither time nor place suited for meditation, however much inclined; so, hastily snatching up his portmanteau, which he had left at the root of the pear-tree, he hurried from the Grange, and, as his waggish porter had prognosticated, repaired to the Crown, from whence a post-chaise conveyed him to Felton Main, the residence of his earliest friend, Cleveland Coulson.

CHAPTER VII.
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He left his home, his friends, his titles, all,  
To stand, or live, or perish in their pride,  
And, seeking out some unknown country—died.

MARCIAN COLONNA.

CLIFFORD'S anxiety to acquire some accurate intelligence relative to his parents, and more particularly his father, had increased rather than diminished with the lapse of time; he had at last received an authentic document, and the paper presented by his uncle was opened with an impatient and agitated hand. When he first rivetted his eyes on the name attached to the verses, he became apprehensive that some freak of imagination had affected his sight, and for a time reversed his glance, in hopes the fantasy would

would pass away ; but when he renewed his scrutiny, the characters were still the same. Strange and undefinable emotions rushed to his heart with sickening velocity, when he came to admit that they actually composed the name of *Ranald Macrimmon* ; he recalled to mind the wanderer bearing that appellation, whose story he had so often heard alluded to when in the Highlands, and whose memory was so dear to the clan whose patronymic he bore. Could it really be—was he indeed a descendant from that old and honourable line, whose blood circulated in the veins of Lillias Macara ? it was the first question of his heart, and he dragged forth the miniature of his father, to see if it would answer by claiming a family-resemblance. The blue eye, the fair waving locks, the contour of the whole countenance, bespoke a striking similarity to Lochullin and his sisters—nay, even to the old chief ; and Clifford

was

was left to marvel at his own stupidity in not having sooner detected the likeness.

Doubt and despondency succeeded to feelings closely allied to rapture and pride: that his father might prove to be the wandering and self-exiled nephew of sir Colin Macrimmon appeared probable, but was there aught in that circumstance to bid *him* exult? His uncle had unhesitatingly expressed his belief that he was an illegitimate child; every circumstance that had come to his knowledge, connected with the history of his parents, countenanced the supposition; and the name and reflected honours of his ancestors were consequently alike denied him—he was lopped off the family-tree as a spurious branch, and, if he valued the credit he had acquired by his own exertions, would take care to altogether disclaim the line from which he sprung, be it ever so ennobled.

From

From these and similar cogitations he roused himself to more minutely examine the verses to which the name was annexed, but they could scarcely be said to throw any additional light on the matter; they seemed to have been written on the eve of the author's departure for America, were addressed simply "to Ellen," and as follows:—

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" Let us fly beyond the ocean,  
To the Transatlantic shore,  
And leave, despite emotion,  
The soil we lov'd of yore;  
Let us seek those fields and fountains  
Where the quiver'd Indian roves,  
And change our heathy mountains  
For lone Canadian groves.

" What though the tear of sorrow  
Bedim thine eyes a while,  
When thou dost know no morrow  
Restores thy native isle—  
When its dusky headlands fading,  
Are hidden by the wave,  
And the waters round thee spreading  
No more its islets lave ?

" Soon,

“ Soon, soon thy heart shall lighten,  
And sorrow vanish fast,  
When morning sunbeams brighten  
Thy foreign home at last ;  
When thine eyes shall feast on wonders,  
And thy feet shall tread on flowers,  
Where Niagara thunders,  
In nature’s mighty bowers.

“ Nor shall our lives be lonely,  
Or our days be dull and drear,  
Though the roaming Indian only  
Our solitude shall cheer ;  
Though the feet of kindred never  
Our distant haunts may press,  
And our home be fix’d for ever  
Within the wilderness.

“ Nor shall we dread the winters  
Canadian forests know,  
But pass our lives as hunters  
Of the stately deer and roe ;  
Or, in our birch-boat dancing,  
The fisher’s vigil keep,  
Where Erie’s waves are glancing,  
Or Ontario’s waters sleep.

“ And when our heads grow hoary,  
And our sinews lose their power,  
Some long-remember’d story  
Shall cheer the twilight hour ;

White

While our children's eyes shall brighten  
When of that island told,  
Whence, with but hope to lighten,  
Their parents came of old.

“ Then fly beyond the ocean,  
To the western lands with me;  
The winds, with gentle motion,  
Shall waft us o'er the sea.  
Come, come, a home is waiting  
On a far untrodden shore,  
Where the storms of life abating,  
Shall toss our bark no more.”

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Repeatedly, during the ride to Felton Main, did Clifford peruse these verses; it was evident they had been written with a view to entice some attached female to share an emigrant's destiny, and their being addressed to Ellen proved as distinctly who that female was, as the name annexed declared the author. There was something in their style that tallied not exactly with the miser's former affirmation, that Ranald Macrimmon's desertion of “ sister Ellen” had been



been conspicuously cruel and final, neither did they appear to breathe the sentiments of a depraved and hardened heart, desirous of persisting in a career of guilt; they rather resembled the production of a husband anxious to cheer the partner of his affection on the eve of separation from the land of her nativity; and though, to counterbalance this, Clifford was compelled to remember that his mother had been left behind, he gladly admitted the possibility that many circumstances might have concurred to render her departure unadvisable, without criminating him whose destiny she had not been permitted to share. So soothing was this reflection, that it was with pain and reluctance he came to confess that, after all, it was but a vague supposition—a dream, of which he dared not hope ever to obtain a solution; he might be heir to sir Colin Macrimmon—born to inherit the title claimed by his enemy Glen Eynort, yet, owing to a

tissue of untoward circumstances, never have it in his power to authenticate and establish his rights; there was no clew to follow—no source of information within his reach. The secret inquiries he had made, years before, both at Newcastle and at Edinburgh, had proved ineffectual; and to renew these at a later date, promised to serve no purpose save wasting time and subjecting himself to distressing queries. He could perceive there was a better chance of coming at the truth, by giving publicity to the affair by means of advertisements; but against this every feeling of his heart revolted; to run the hazard of raking up the errors of his parents, and perhaps publishing the shame he inherited as his birthright, was out of the question; to live and die in ignorance seemed by far the minor evil. He could not suppress a pang of regret when he recalled to mind the long period in which he had sojourned amongst his father's kindred, without

without being sensible of the ties of consanguinity subsisting between them. How fondly, though secretly, would he have confessed the sympathetic chord that bound him to Lochullin and Lillias Macara! how keenly interested himself in the fate of the meanest clansman in Glen Rimmon! A transient thrill of exultation pervaded his breast at the idea that it might yet be his lot to drag Glen Eynort from a station he was unworthy of, and bind on his own brow the honours his crimes had tarnished; but it was quickly subdued by the recollection that Lillias Macara, as his wife, must share his fall, and her child be disinherited; in that moment Clifford confessed that even the degradation of his remorseless persecutor, and his installation in all the hereditary honours of Macrimmon, would leave behind them reflections rife with bitterness.

His arrival at Felton Main changed for a time the current of his thoughts;

the father of a numerous family, and happy in the wife he had chosen, Coulson received his less fortunate friend with open arms, and at his cheerful fireside the latter soon forgot his inhospitable reception at the Grange; had not his recently-acquired information regarding his origin frequently plunged him into painful and uncommunicable meditation, Clifford would have looked upon the period he passed in that joyous circle as the happiest of his life, with the exception of those golden days in which he had been the friend and companion of Lillias Macara. Though he had, on his arrival, limited his stay to a week, a month slipped away, and still he was Coulson's guest; roused at length to a sense of the lapse of time, he firmly named a day for his departure, which his host, as usual, set himself determinately to postpone.—“Where, where would you go, my dear fellow?” said he; “your sword is cast aside—your  
time

time entirely at your own disposal—your residence where you list; so why grudge me a few weeks more of your society? Thank God, to me my home is always a happy one! yet it is not incapable of being rendered more so by the presence of an amiable and enlightened friend. Do you not perceive that your society gives zest to every hour we are together, whether it be passed in the fields, at our wine, or in the nursery? How can you be so obstinate and unaccommodating as to take yourself off in this hasty way?”

“ You wrong me much, Coulson,” was the reply, “ when you say I hurry away; I have spent under your roof nearly treble the time I at first intended, and that I have enjoyed my visit its prolongation best bespeaks. But I must not become burthensome to hospitality, or allow my society to turn stale. I have sketched to you the plan I mean to pursue relative to the disposal of my  
K 3 time;



time; I will go travel on the Continent for a few years, and at least endeavour to guard against indolence and misanthropy, if I do not add to the little knowledge I already possess. When I return, I hope there is no danger of my finding the road to Felton Main blocked up; and who knows but I may then have acquired more solidity, and so be better inclined to acquiesce in any of your friendly propositions?"

"You are solid enough as it is," returned Coulson—"at all events, I do not see how stability is to be acquired in France, or in any continental state, if it keeps aloof in old England. I would have you to drop this wandering scheme altogether; follow my example, by turning benedict; and then become lawyer, divine, merchant, or farmer, as it suits your fancy and means. Provided you are inclined to exert yourself in any respectable vocation, I see no impropriety in your providing yourself with a wife,  
and



and getting seated in a comfortable home without delay; no doubt you have left, in some town or other, a “ladye fair,” who, in due time, expects to be Mrs. Clifford; if she is virtuous and amiable, she will do—if she has beauty and fortune in addition, so much the better; and the sooner you make her a proffer of hand and heart, the more wisdom will I give you credit for.”

“If the scheme could be as easily executed as planned,” said Clifford, smiling, “I might be tempted to follow your advice; but there are many obstacles in the way, of which you have no idea. In the first place, there is no lady who expects to be Mrs. Clifford lying *perdue*; secondly, I have no inclination for the law, no interest for the church, neither habits nor capital for a merchant, and—and no wife to look after a farmer’s establishment; in short, I must persist in remaining what I am—a vagrant and a bachelor.”

“ Well, well,” returned Coulson, somewhat out of humour, “ I can perceive the chief impediment is your own obstinacy ; but, take my word for it, Clifford, that man shows a reprehensible dearth of wisdom who regrets those comforts he may command, because the path of life is not chalked out exactly to his liking. I shall no longer oppose your departure, but I trust that, when you return from your wanderings, it will be with a heart resigned to the dispensations of fortune, and framed to derive happiness from such sources as Providence, in its goodness, thinks fit to cast in your way.”

The subject was canvassed no more, but Clifford did not soon forget the concluding advice, nor neglect to profit by it. He left Felton Main with sincere regret, bearing with him the best wishes of its hospitable owner, and, three days after, arrived in the metropolis.

Before he could start on his projected tour, various arrangements connected with

with his military situation required to be made ; and before these were effected, a circumstance occurred, which, though it did not prevent his leaving his native country, materially influenced his movements. One morning, on his way to the Horse Guards, he unexpectedly encountered Tarleton, in company with a handsome and martial-looking young man, in a foreign pelisse, and with a star of the Legion of Honour dangling at his breast. Their delight at meeting was reciprocal, and Tarleton, after introducing his companion as the chevalier L'Evali, hastened to make inquiry after his friend's pursuits. These were disclosed in a few words ; and, in return, the same question was put to himself. Tarleton's answer was equally brief, for he was also on the wing, but with this difference, that, instead of idling away his time on the Continent of Europe, he was bent on aiding, with his sword, the patriots of South America.—“ Yes,” he exclaimed,

after declaring his intentions, and with the fire of a gallant spirit flashing from his eyes as he spoke, "my country has no further need of me—her battles are fought, her foes are scattered; and to what better purpose can I devote my time and my strength, than in assisting to rescue a suffering people from despotism and slavery? Clifford, to free the European Spaniard from bondage we have stood together on many a bloody field; shall we not also fight side by side for the cause of the Transatlantic?"

Clifford required some time for consideration before he gave an answer to this enthusiastic question, though the South American revolution, and the promises held out to British officers engaging in the contest, had frequently before been mentally canvassed; the advice of Coulson had partly swayed him to drop all idea of joining in the enterprise; but when, in addition to the many secret ties that drew him to America, he heard

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the adventure strenuously advocated by Tartleton—that Tarleton who had supported him in the most trying hour of his life—in danger and in shame, he hesitated no longer.—“Be it so,” said he—“I will accompany you to Venezuela;” and Tartleton’s triumph was complete.

The chevalier lost no time in offering his congratulations, for he too was enlisted in the same cause. He had been one of Napoleon’s captains—had crossed the Niemen and the Beresina under his command—beheld the gilded cupolas and the flames of Moscow—and fought at Borodino, at Smolensko, at Leipzig, and at Montmartre; still he was but a youth, and, with all the ardency of his age, and a spirit roused by the recollection of the past, exulted at the prospect of once more rioting in battle.—“France is now no home for the soldier,” said he, in good English—“her glory is gone; the pallid lily flaunts where the eagle flew, the foreigner treads on the hero’s  
K 6 hearth,



hearth, and he whose soul spurns to yield to the yoke has no resource but exile. Time was—but no matter—time may be again.”

If the Englishmen did not entirely subscribe to these assertions, they were not so rude as to contradict him; there was something in his fine intelligent face that strongly solicited regard, and Clifford frankly confessed his satisfaction that they were likely to have such a colleague. As it was necessary for the furtherance of their plans to obtain, without delay, an interview with the agent for the patriot cause then in London, they immediately proceeded to Grafton-street, where their anxiety to engage in the service of the Columbian republic met with all the encouragement fair words and brilliant promises could give. The Frenchman soon after made his bow, and left the friends at liberty to indulge in more familiar conversation.

Farther than mentioning that he had  
passed



passed a month in Northumberland, Clifford had nothing of moment to communicate; but he openly acknowledged his surprise at seeing his friend again unsettled.—“I remember perfectly well,” added he, “how you were in the habit of eulogizing the comforts of your father’s house, the affection of your brother and sisters, and the many nameless attractions of Heddon Glebe—nay, I am not sure but you prefaced our last separation by a hint that you had some thoughts of transforming your sword into a ploughshare, and at the same time becoming a votary at the shrine of Hymen. When I recall all these circumstances to mind, it certainly behoves me to be surprised at finding you rife for engaging in an adventure which suits only those who have neither *amante*, home, or kindred.”

“Your memory is very faithful,” observed Tarleton, endeavouring to laugh away the transient cloud the foregoing speech

speech had caused to appear; “and, on the whole, I do believe you have great reason to jeer me as a very fickle fellow. However, my conduct is not beyond palliation. When I described Heddon Glebe as a paradise, we were most commonly skulking in a cork wood on the slope of some wild *sierra*, with a pitiless rain pouring on us, and momentarily threatening to extinguish our feeble watch-fire, while, at the same time, I well knew that the every thought of a mother I loved was with her wandering son. You may remember how bitterly the death of that mother affected me, and you can easily suppose that the female whom my father soon after selected to supply her place, required to be little less than an angel to meet my approbation:—alas! I found in my step-dame a cold-hearted repelling stranger, meanly suspicious of any influence I might possess in family-council, and with barely sufficient civility to conceal

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that the sooner I beat a march the better. My brother, from a generous-hearted fox-hunting youth, had degenerated into a perfect sot, whose sole pleasure and recreation consisted in guzzling filthy beer with low pothouse companions; my sisters had become wives, and consequently were too much occupied with their husbands and children to think of wasting more kindness on the poor H. P. than lay within the compass of a dinner and a bed: in short, to crown all, I found my *amante* up to the ears in finery and preparing for a wedding—not on the strength of my return, but as the envied bride of a rich cotton-spinner, who, when on the verge of fifty, had discovered that he required to add a young wife to his other comforts. The rubicund face, jolly rotundity of person, and commercial importance of old Calico, had overturned in a twinkling the fidelity pledged to the roving soldier, whom spare diet and hard marching had worn to a whipping-post,

post, and whose sole introduction to society was a passable exterior, the title of captain H. P. and seven shillings per diem. To be candid, however, the girl had certainly some excuse; for, during the six years an ocean divided us, I was but an indifferent correspondent. I suppose, poor thing, she thought she would miss her market if she lived longer on hope, and so, from dread of the garret, dropped into the arms of the cotton-spinner. I have a shrewd suspicion that the soldier, had he chosen to make the essay, might, by a *coup de main*, have dislodged honest Calico from his usurped position; but having proved the citadel to be liable to be taken by sap and mine, I held it not worth the risk, and coolly drew off my forces. This done, I shook the dust off my feet, bade Lancashire adieu in a whistle, and here I am, ripe and ready for a dash at the dons in South America."

Clifford felt tempted to be jocular on  
the

the subject of his friend's disappointments, but he perceived the smart was more severe than the narrator was willing to allow, and therefore resisted the inclination. The fact was, Tarleton's pride and affection had been seriously outraged by finding himself nobody when he returned, a "poor but honest soldier," to his paternal home: long habituated to act and feel independently, he could not bear to have it supposed that he wished to seat himself at any fireside as a needy idler, or that he was so situated as to take cool looks tamely from any one; on the first symptoms of lukewarm regard he sounded the "note of preparation," and departed the moment he ascertained that Cupid had likewise joined the league against him, fully satisfied that where no affection existed, none was due.

During the fortnight they were occupied in arranging matters for leaving England the friends were constantly,  
together,



together, and the young Frenchman L'Evali often shared in the consultations relative to the impending voyage; a countrywoman, light-hearted and reckless as himself, had followed his fortunes, and all the representations the Englishmen took the liberty to make use of, were insufficient to convince him of the madness of exposing a female to the privations and dangers incidental to an expedition such as that he contemplated. Eulalie, he said, was the only thing on earth he valued, now that he had lived to witness the degradation of his country, and the fall of that mighty chief under whose auspices he at one time hoped to obtain a marshal's baton and a principality. When he came to the resolution of leaving France, he had proffered all it was in his power to bestow—his heart and hand, and they had been as frankly accepted; he was perfectly aware he had broken through those prudential rules it behoved every soldier to  
adhere



adhere to in taking to himself a wife, but still he could not bring himself to regret it: as to privations and dangers, Eulalie was ready, for his sake, to brave them in their most frightful attitude; it was not in his nature, therefore, to compel her to remain behind—indeed, could he even bring himself so to do, the state of his finances forbade it; better follow him, and perish on the Spanish Main, than linger in Europe, the prey of grief and the sport of a thousand misfortunes.

Against this mode of arguing the Englishmen had nothing to oppose, but they could not behold without painful anticipation a creature so young, so lovely, so delicate, and so tender-hearted, as madame L'Evali, on the eve of exposing herself to perils which were enough to daunt a masculine heart. On this subject the affectionate pair conceived their anxiety to be premature, if not altogether groundless; the chevalier had the idol of his breast near him, and  
was

was too happy in the devotedness she displayed to wish it otherwise, or to anticipate aught but joy ; the gentle being herself foresaw no hazard of earthly sorrow while her warrior was left to smile, and smiled on her.

As soon as the Englishmen had obtained permission to leave the kingdom for a stated period without sacrificing their British commissions, they struck a bargain for their passage with the owners of a vessel bound for the West Indies, trusting to find easy access from thence to the Spanish Main. Each had contrived to amass a few hundred pounds, the residue of carefully-economized pay, prize-money, and compensations for wounds, by which means they not only had it in their power to lay in a proper sea-stock, but had also the cheering prospect of possessing an overplus sufficient to meet any exigences they might be subjected to on first landing in a strange country. The Venezuelan agent, whom  
they

they frequently consulted previous to embarking, was profuse in his assurances that such guarding against contingencies was unnecessary; he had authority to state, he said, that the government of Columbia would immediately, on their reporting themselves at the head-quarters of the general-in-chief, enrol them in the patriot army at least one grade higher in rank than the commissions they held in the British service; pay equivalent to their appointments would commence from the date of their arrival; and, in order to reimburse them for the expences of the voyage, a handsome gratuity would be allowed. All this told well, but the volunteers were not so inexperienced as to implicitly rely on these statements; they had had ocular proof of the horrible state of disorganization and misery into which internal war plunges a country—they knew that the contest in South America had been generating for a series of years, and conducted under

der circumstances of peculiar ferocity and devastation; nor did it escape their recollection that they were about to advocate the cause least likely to have the power to immediately remunerate its supporters. On recompence ultimately, in some shape or other, both conceived they were entitled to calculate; yet mercenary incitement was one of the minor motives by which they were actuated; they were idle at home, had no friends whose hearts their absence was to torture, and last, but not least, were about to assist a suffering people in their struggle for liberty—that precious boon of Heaven, which, as Britons, they had learned so dearly to appreciate. Should success not crown their efforts, or should disappointment, in any shape, await them in the West, they had still the compensation granted them by their own country to return to; and should they never return, whom had they left behind to lament them?

CHAP-

CHAPTER VIII.  
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Home of our hearts ! our fathers home !

Land of the brave and free !

The sail is flapping on the foam,

That bears us far from thee.

THOMAS PRINGLE.

CLIFFORD and his friend watched the disappearing cliffs of their native land with unshrinking hearts, but with feelings similar to those we experience when aware we are quitting some beloved spot for ever; our country is dear to us under every circumstance, and conscious they had not only the perils incidental to warfare to encounter, but also the evils of a pestilential climate, the adventurers felt saddened, but not repentant, as they admitted the rational surmise that they beheld, for the last time, its

its happy shores. Besides M. L'Evali and his lady, three persons, bound for the same destination, were passengers on board the same vessel; the most conspicuous of the trio, owing to his pompous and braggart habits, luggage, &c. was an Irishman, designated captain O'Rourke—a gentleman who, by his own account, was inferior to no general of the age—always excepting, from sheer modesty, Buonaparte and the duke of Wellington. During the voyage it was discovered that his military experience was confined to serving a few campaigns as cornet of yeomanry in his native village, where he had carried on the respectable calling of a licensed grocer. Having neglected and ruined his business by too strict attention to his regimental duty and the bottle, Ireland, in the end, became too limited a field for his expansive genius; so he indignantly retreated from bailiffs and a jail, to take up a new position with the patriot cohorts

horts of South America. As he had a particular antipathy to recur to the past, as far as regarded reality, he made ample amends for his taciturnity in this respect, by giving full latitude to a fertile imagination, and retailing, with as much nonchalance as if he were still among tea and sugar, his hair-breadth 'scapes and promptness of action in battles he had but read of in the newspapers. A wife, whom he had picked up in an unlucky visit to Scotland, and who spoke the dialect of her native country in all its purity, shared his bed and board; she had resolved, she said, never to desert her "dear gudeman," let fortune frown as it might; affection was her ostensible motive, but it was easy to discover that the true cause of her adhesion was her dread that Pat, once out of sight, would quickly forget that he had vowed to cherish, till death, his Caledonian lady. What the husband wanted in candour relative to the past, his rib took care

should be no deprivation to her fellow-voyagers; she was eternally introducing herself behind the counter, and many a bitter oath and lie-direct did her blunders purchase.

The last of the trio was a Welchman, and no more able to conceal his country, had he so desired, than Mrs. Captain O'Rourke. He had received the education of a surgeon, and was not destitute of abilities; but these not meeting due encouragement in Britain, he had, as a desperate resource, prevailed on his friends to subscribe amongst them as much money as would carry him to Venezuela, where he speculated on making a rapid fortune. He was modest, obliging, and, on the whole, rather an acquisition to the party, on account of his chirurgical acquirements.

The voyage commenced prosperously, but heavy adverse gales were subsequently encountered, and it was the end of the third week before they made Madeira.

deira. Notwithstanding the vessel turned out an excellent sea-boat, and dashed merrily through the tremendous head-seas she had to contend with, captain O'Rourke was sufficiently alarmed to confirm what his lady accidentally disclosed, concerning the empty boasting he had previously indulged in of having twice crossed the Bay of Biscay, and been once shipwrecked on the coast of Portugal. To Tarleton and the chevalier L'Evali he was too tempting a butt to be spared, for both had seen enough of the world to condemn heartily his braggadocio habits; scarce a day elapsed without some joke being played off at his expence, and to facilitate its execution, the whole crew willingly lent assistance. At one time he was made to rush out of his warm hammock almost in a state of nudity, and, with his shrieking helpmate clinging to his skirts, hurry upon deck, under the impression that the ship was foundering; nor was he

permitted to return to his lair till he had enjoyed all the comforts of a shower-bath from the bursting spray. At another, when a boat was launching for any particular purpose, it was hinted to him that the boisterous weather had so damaged the ship that she could not hold together many hours; that, conscious of this, the crew were on the eve of deserting her, and leaving the passengers to their fate; and that, unless he made haste and looked to his own safety, he was a lost man. Hints like these were never thrown away on the captain; he usually seized hold of the first valuable article of his luggage he could lay his hands on, and endeavoured to cast himself headlong into the boat, under the impression that it was about to quit the vessel; the more the seamen struggled to keep him back, the more firmly was he convinced of their inhuman intents; and such a state of irritability did his nerves attain, that it always required
several

several hours and a little brandy to restore his mind to its former tranquillity.

O'Rourke was greatly annoyed by the frequent repetition of these false alarms, which he strenuously insisted upon as being contrary to the articles of war, and liable to be punished accordingly; but so assured was he of his own importance, that he never discovered they were propagated with the intention of merely affording mirth at his expence. He looked upon Tarleton and the chevalier as friendly but timid fellows, and failed not, as soon as he had regained his self-possession, to read them a pompous lecture on the impropriety of giving way to their fears on trivial occasions, to the great molestation of much braver men. The inquietude thus produced, the squally weather, and, above all, the serious mortality amongst their live stock, combined to sicken him thoroughly of the voyage, and when Madeira hove in sight, he had almost come to the resolution of resign-

ing all hope of military renown, and shaping his course back to the land of potatoes; the master of the vessel's assertion, that there was every chance of favourable weather afterwards attending them, came in time to subdue the inglorious idea, and, despite Mrs. O'Rourke's tears and entreaties, the captain had the temerity to persevere.

As the seaman had prognosticated, balmy gales wafted them from the meridian of the Canaries to the West Indies. As they neared the equator, the heat became oppressive to O'Rourke, who inclined to corpulency; but as the sea was smooth, and the wind so steady as seldom to require the shifting of a sail, he gladly put up with this inconvenience. The novelties of the equinoctial latitudes were at first a source of amusement, but, at the expiration of five weeks, their arrival at their destined port was eagerly anticipated. At length, by the dim light of a cloudy morning, a lofty island

island was descried ahead; the terraced and carefully-cultivated heights, the dazzling whiteness of the rocks, agreeably contrasted with the bright verdure of scattered trees, and, above all, the groups of lofty cylindrical cactuses crowning the hills, gave it altogether a tropical physiognomy; they had made the island of Tobago, and as the day advanced they weathered its northern cape. On the following morning they terminated their voyage, by dropping anchor in St. George's Bay, Grenada.

Prior to leaving London, Clifford and his friend had been assured, from good authority, that they would find it an easy matter to reach the Spanish Main from Grenada, as vessels were constantly plying to and fro between that island and the great river Orinoco; in this they were not deceived, for, at the time of their arrival, two schooners, on the eve of sailing for Angostura, lay moored in the carenage. Desirous of prosecuting
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their adventure without delay, they made preparations for sailing in the first that cleared out; but finding, on inspection, that the accommodation it offered was far inferior to that of the other, they altered their intention. The transient procrastination thereby occasioned was, however, submitted to with little reluctance, as they had formerly been on terms of intimacy with several officers of the British regiment stationed in the island, and were glad to profit by their civilities. M. L'Evali, and the Welchman, surgeon Ap Rice, followed their example; but captain O'Rourke, like a true soldier, held the filthy state of the vessel as a matter of no importance, and openly reprobated their fastidiousness; the truth was, he found that, by embarking on board the rejected schooner, he could transport himself and appendages to the Main on more economical terms than if he were to take his passage on board the other; and at the same time

cunningly

cunningly inferred that, by getting the start of his brother-adventurers, he might eventually turn their dilatoriness to his own advantage. His desertion from the party was a subject of general congratulation, for no one was desirous of making their appearance at the head-quarters of the patriot army in company with such an incorrigible Bobadil.

The reports in circulation at Grenada, respecting the independent cause, were various and contradictory, yet on one point they tallied so well, that the Englishmen saw reason to rejoice they had not implicitly relied on the representations of its British envoy; even those who leaned to the side of the revolutionists admitted that arms and ammunition were scant, money not to be had, and personal comfort, either in clothing, food, or lodging, not to be calculated on. To this the royalist party added, that the insurgent army was a mere rabble, at once destitute of discipline and organi-

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zation,

zation, and led by chiefs who took pride in outdoing each other in atrocity. These were not very flattering accounts, but both held it as pusillanimous to retrograde, after having gone so far.—“ If the cause is unfortunate,” said Clifford, in a consultation on the subject, “ it has the more need of support ; and I believe neither of us will shrink from honourably braving hardship and danger. As to the inhuman crimes the leaders are said to be in the habit of perpetrating, let us not form our opinion until we are eye-witnesses, for rumour seldom improves a tale when it condemns the weaker party.”

Tarleton fully concurred in these sentiments, but the chevalier shrugged up his shoulders in a manner that told he was not altogether satisfied ; with the characteristic foppery and passion for display incidental to his nation, he had decked himself out *en militaire* the moment he set foot on the island, and in a
short

short time his lovely wife, blue silver-braided jacket, scarlet trowsers, and lofty fur cap, were the admiration of all Grenada.—“ The discipline,” he observed, playing with the gay star on his breast as he spoke, “ might be improved ; the atrocities complained of were the natural consequences of civil war ; but the want of money, food, and clothing, were evils of the most disheartening, and, he feared, irremediable description. Give him but a mouthful to eat, a dollar or two in his pocket, a decent coat on his back, and some hundred bayonets at his command, and he would defy disaster and the devil ; but all the saints preserve him from joining an army destitute of supplies ! Nevertheless, as he had embarked in the cause, and was driven to desperation by the recent events in Europe, he would not turn his back more than others, be the consequences what they might ; he had braved with his heroic emperor the famine and cold of a Russian winter,

and it would ill become him, therefore, to shrink from encountering the trifling dangers attendant on following Bolivar for a campaign or two in the torrid zone."

Surgeon Ap Rice said nothing, but he thought the more; longevity and salubrity of climate were not amongst the evils complained of, and he shrewdly inferred that it would go badly with him indeed if he did not keep soul and body together, even though privation should speedily consign his companions to the worms. To strengthen his hopes, he had latterly been favoured with several visions, *alias* dreams, all of which went to prognosticate that he would soon attain the rank of surgeon-general of the independent army; and, with David Ap Jones Ap Rice, dreams were tantamount to reality. At Grenada he parted with his last shilling, but the generosity of Clifford relieved him from embarrassment.

The schooner being at length ready to sail,

sail, the whole party embarked, and soon after stood out of the bay. They had scarcely bid adieu to Grenada, when a vessel hove in sight, carrying at her top-mast head a yellow flag spangled with black stars; the master of the schooner hailed it as the Venezuelian ensign, and, in obedience to a signal, bore down on the stranger; on nearing her, a boat was let down, and he went on board, but quickly returned with the information that she was a sloop of war belonging to the independents, commanded by an Englishman, and bound for the Orinoco, and that such of the British officers as chose were very welcome to share the superior accommodation she afforded. This was too good an offer to be rejected, for the schooner was unpleasantly crowded, and swarming with cockroaches, centipedes, &c. to an alarming degree. Clifford and Tarleton had their luggage instantly lowered into the boat, and, at their recommendation, the chevalier

valier followed their example, principally on account of his wife, who was kept in a state of constant agitation by the swarms of noxious insects. No entreaties, however, could prevail on doctor Ap Jones Ap Rice to remove likewise—he was resolved to remain by the schooner at all hazard; and when requested to assign a reason for his singular obstinacy, confessed that, on the preceding night, he had had a dream, by which he was forewarned to let no inducement whatever tempt him to quit the schooner until she was anchored before Angostura. To argue with a man actuated by notions so preposterous was out of the question, and he was left to enjoy his own opinions.

Once on board the Independent, the Englishmen were not long in discovering their advantageous exchange, not only in the accommodation, but in their captain; they found themselves under the protection of a countryman, who
bore

bore in his open manly face the honourable characteristics of a British sailor, and in his language and deportment those of a well-educated and intelligent man. He received them on the quarter-deck, and with much courtesy, welcoming the Frenchman with as much cordiality as if he had been a compatriot, and his lady with that urbanity and politeness which are so strikingly attractive when conjoined with the frank familiarity of a polished seaman; he insisted on surrendering his cabin in their favour, and enhanced the obligation by endeavouring to impress them with a belief that he shewed no self-denial, being necessitated to remain almost constantly on deck, in order to guard against surprise from the Spanish gun-boats infesting the mouths of the Orinoco. It is needless to add, that the affability and hospitable attentions of captain Hillyard materially lessened the discomforts more or less attendant on all voyages.

It

It was yet dark, and about an hour before day, when, having been upwards of a week at sea, the pilot on board sung out “soundings!” and a heavy ground swell announced they were in the vicinity of the principal mouth of the Orinoco. As the dawn was so near, it was not deemed requisite to bring the ship to anchor; she therefore continued under easy sail, and when the day broke, Cape Barinas, the southern promontory of the river, was visible. The schooner, having kept company during the voyage, was also descried, but considerably ahead—a piece of daring captain Hillyard strongly reprobated, considering the safe convoy he could have given her. He had scarcely made this observation, when she displayed a signal that the enemy were on the outlook; and soon after several gun-boats, full of men, and so divided as to intercept her in all directions, were seen pulling swiftly under the land, which was momentarily becoming more distinct.

distinct. Aware of her jeopardy when too late, the schooner stood back to meet the consort whose protection she had previously contemned; but unfortunately she grounded on one of the many banks that form the bar of the Orinoco, and her crew had no alternative but to escape in their boats and leave her to her fate, or remain on board and be massacred by the enemy. In such exigence there could be no hesitation what course to adopt, and captain Hillyard had soon the satisfaction of seeing the crowded boat pulling towards his vessel, while at the same time he descried the Spaniards boarding the stranded bark. When the boat ran alongside, Clifford and his companions, highly diverted at the summary manner in which doctor Ap Jones Ap Rice had been compelled to quit the Liberator, prepared to treat his misfortune with the jocularitv it deserved, when, to their no small consternation, they discovered he was not amongst the refugees.

To

To their anxious inquiries concerning him the master of the schooner replied, that, when about to desert the ship, he observed the surgeon preparing to descend the hatchway instead of betaking to flight; that he had called to him at the moment, and even followed him into the hold, in order to induce him to look to his safety, but all to no purpose—David Ap Jones Ap Rice had “dreamed a dream,” and Solomon himself must have failed to conquer his prejudices. The enemy were straining every nerve to effect their capture—so it was unanimously resolved to let the foolhardy foreigner have his own way; the boat departed, and the moon-stricken son of St. Taffid was left to reap the fruits of his obstinacy.

When captain Hillyard conceived his vessel sufficiently near to admit of his guns doing execution, he commenced firing round shot at the gun-boats surrounding the schooner; and as the breeze

was

was favourable, and every sail set, they soon came to annoy the captors, who ultimately made a hasty retreat, leaving her to be retaken. Anxious concerning the fate of poor Ap Rice, Clifford and Tarleton volunteered to go on board in one of the boats dispatched to endeavour to bring her off; they reached her barely in time to save her from the flames, but too late to be of any service to the miserable Welchman; he had been dragged out from under the cask beneath which he had concealed himself, and was found dead in the hold, with his hands cut off and upwards of twenty stabs in various parts of his body. Thus had he fallen a victim to his own perverted imagination, and in beholding his mangled remains, which were afterwards consigned to the deep, his fellow-adventurers had a specimen of the treatment awaiting them, should they be made prisoners in the patriot ranks.

The schooner was easily towed out of
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the soft mud in which she had been incautiously imbedded, and having received no material damage, was quickly refitted and remanned, after which both vessels stood boldly into the river. At the time when land was first descried, the Englishmen had prepared themselves to scan its features with deep attention; but the recent catastrophe tended in a certain measure to destroy the pleasure they anticipated deriving from their observations, and engendered in their hearts sentiments of mortal antipathy towards the barbarians who could so inhumanly butcher a helpless captive. To appearance, the coast was covered with wood, unvaried by hills, and of remarkable, yet, to strange eyes, not unpleasing uniformity. It retained this aspect throughout the day, though, aided by a prosperous breeze, they made considerable progress up the river. At night, apprehensive of grounding if they continued their course, an anchor was let go, and with
the

the darkness new causes of wonder and admiration were given to the Europeans; they looked to the starry firmament above them, but they saw not the constellations they had been accustomed to behold—all were strangers, except in what they knew of them from the page of science; and though this was not the first night on which they had noted the glories of the tropic sky, the reflection that they were floating on the stream of the great Orinoco gave unusual interest to their observations.

Nor was it in the starry vault alone that strange phenomena were apparent; the atmosphere they breathed, the water on which they slumbered, the distant shore, on whose desert strand glittered and moaned the phosphorescent waves, incessantly presented subjects for contemplation and astonishment; the musquitoes swarmed in dense and merciless clouds about the deck; the enormous water-serpent played in myriads round
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the keel, blending its fierce hiss with the loud splashing of the alligator; the cry of the jaguar (the tyger of the new Continent) echoed from the beach, and mingled with a thousand other sounds and noises strange and mysterious, while on board the vessel the languages of four nations were in use; it was the first night of their sojourn in South America, and the heart of each mentally whispered that the remembrance would not be soon effaced.

CHAPTER IX.



He'd undertake to prove, by force
Of argument, a man's no horse ;
He'd prove a buzzard is no fowl,
And that a lord may be an owl. HUDIBRAS.

ON the ensuing morning both vessels weighed anchor, and continued to stand up the river with a favourable breeze. As they penetrated into the interior, the uniformity of the landscape ceased ; eminences, clothed to their very summits with the pirajao palm, the lofty bombax, and a nameless variety of majestic trees, and deep valleys, impervious to human tread from the luxuriance of tropical vegetation, were alternately presented to the eyes of the delighted Europeans, as they sped swiftly up the mighty and now-meandering stream, in whose bosom

som many bright islets reposed. The second night was passed opposite an Indian village, from which they were supplied with fresh provisions and abundance of those delicious fruits peculiar to the equinoctial regions. Next day they had to stem several rapids, and at times enormous rocks narrowed the channel; but, notwithstanding the augmenting interruptions to navigation, the town of old Guiana, with its fort, came in view with the evening; and in it they hailed the first port at which they were likely to meet with any of the independent army. In its aspect the place bore no testimony of having prospered under the protection of the flag displayed on its citadel; though naturally a strong and easily-defended position, the patriots had taken it by a *coup de main* a short time before, and put to death, without mercy, several hundred royalists, whose unburied bones yet remained to testify their triumph; desolation was apparent in

in every building, misery in every countenance, and throughout the whole mass of population symptoms of the most grievous wretchedness and penury were perceptible; in short, all those horrible features which desolating war stamps on the towns it scourges, were impressed on old Guiana, and the Englishmen made sail from it with pleasure, trusting they would find matters different at Angostura, the chief town of the province.

At Angostura they at length arrived, and leaving the chevalier and his lady on board, the Englishmen made haste to land, gratefully accepting the offer of captain Hillyard to bear them company. It was early in the day, and scarcely had they stepped ashore, when, decked out in his best, a swacking sabre at his side, and a gay cross dangling at his breast, captain O'Rourke saluted them. Lightly as they were inclined to rate his talents and principles, they gave him a friendly greeting, and Clifford, anxious

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to gain information how they were to proceed, immediately inquired if general Bolivar in person commanded at Angostura?

“No, sir, no,” replied O’Rourke, drawing himself up as straight as his protuberance in front permitted; “the supreme chief, according to the latest accounts, is with his army on the left bank of the Apurè, and near to San Fernando. It is the gallant Bermudez who commands *pro tempore* in Angostura, and, by the soul of Moll Kelly! he promises to turn out a jewel of a commandant. Put a good face on the matter, boys—tip the dons a bit of the blarney, and, by the powers! you’ll be colonels and jinerals in the twinkling of a bedpost!”

“I am glad to find you so sanguine in your expectations,” observed Clifford, “for, to tell the truth, the ravaged aspect of old Guiana has rather damped our hopes. Doubtless the reception you met with from the commandant was highly
flatter” in

flattering, or we should not find you so well satisfied."

"It was exactly as it ought to be, honey," was the answer. "We landed (that is, the woman and I) rather in scurvy trim, for I had ruined every stitch of clothes in that beastly schooner, and the devil an inch of my face but looked as if it had been after being pricked with a thousand needles from mosquito bites; but a soldier who had seen Ciudad Rodrigo stormed, and stood on the plains of Salamanca under the immortal duke, my countryman, had no great cause to trouble himself about how he looked; rare abilities speak for themselves under any guise, and so it proved with your humble servant. I made haste to stow lady O'Rourke out of harm's way the moment I was after touching the shore; 'for,' says I, 'Jenny, my love, it would give the jeneral a maen opinion of my prudence, were I to be dragging the heavy baggage into his

excellency's presence; so you'll just be after keeping yourself quiet for a time, till we see how the land lies.' Jenny, poor shoul! admitted that I advised nothing but what was proper, yet cried like a great baby at being left among strangers, whose complexions were rather of too standing a colour to suit her fancy; however there was no help for it, so I tipped her a smack by the way of a cheerer, and strutted off to report myself to the jeneral-commandant. Being somewhat at a loss to find the jeneral's quarters, as I found I had got hugely rusted in my Spanish, I took the liberty of spaking to an ould, gruff, fusty-looking frump, who wore red facings on a blue jacket, and a tri-coloured cockade in a round hat, like a true horse-marine. He turned out to be a German, and one of the jeneral's aides-de-camp, by the same token; so, as he had a few words of villainous English, I made free to press him into my service, and lug him along
in

in the double capacity of guide and interpreter. Ould Frump acquitted himself to admiration, for when the jeneral came to understand that sir Rourke O'Rourke, late captain in the service of his Britannic majesty, solicited the honour of being allowed to fight under the independent banner, by the powers! he caught me in his arms, and gave me such a squeeze as was nearly after pressing the breath out of me! No doubt he was highly flattered at hearing a titled man, and a captain in the British army, complimenting his bravery; for, you must know, I tipped him off swate words by the score. Yet, boys, I will thank you to be naming the jeneral officer in the king of England's service that would have behaved like the gallant Bermudez, long life and prosperity be his lot! To be sure, the duke, my countryman, has more than once condescended to honour me with his notice; but

the embrace of jeneral Bermudez—och ! och ! I shall never forget it.”

“ And along with his embrace did the general confer that gay cross and your knightly designation ?” inquired Tarleton.

“ Now, jintlemen,” said sir Rourke, with much gravity, “ there’s a bit of a secret, you must know, about that same cross ; to be plain wid you, it was conferred on me years ago, and I dropped my title during the voyage, merely that we might be more at home with each other. Between ourselves I will make bould to say, that neither of you would look a bit the worse though you wore something at your button-hole likewise ; and by-the-bye, if you should think seriously of blinding the dons, I have a couple of crosses in my portmanteau, which are at your service for a due equivalent in hard cash, and not a whit worse than when they left Dame-street. To be

be sure, however, it would be rather a maen imposition, neither of you having a claim to the thing; while I, in addition to my other rights, have even a distant prospect of inheriting a baronetcy."

"Indeed!" said Tarleton, in a tone expressive of admiration—"And pray how may that happen?"

"Och, it is as clear as day!" replied sir Rourke. "My great-grandfather, God rest his ould bones! was first cousin to sir Tooley Mactavish O'Rourke; and though, to be sure, sir Tooley, good luck to him! left thirteen strapping sons, who, like true sprigs of shillelah, have each sent forth his shoot, greater wonders have occurred on the 'blessed sod' than your humble servant stepping into the title; at all events, I see no raison why a man should make a fool of himself by modesty in this vile mosquitoe country, where the devil a thing has he to look at but bare-legged rapparees,

with nothing save a dirty blanket to hide their parchment skins."

"I wish we could find this same aide-camp you so opportunely stumbled on," said Clifford, highly amused, yet averse to losing time; "methinks at this moment his services would be particularly acceptable, went they only so far as to procure us quarters."

"By the powers, honey!" observed sir Rourke, "you will find quarters are not to be had in every house; devil a hole large enough to hold a pig but is choak-full with the army, now on its way to besiege Cumana. Faith! and it was myself, if the truth must be known, that had great difficulty in getting lady O'Rourke dacently lodged, though I had the jeneral's own authority to that effect."

"I suspect you will find this information correct," said captain Hillyard, who had hitherto remained silent; "but I
hope

hope I shall be able to serve you equally as well as the aid-de-camp this gentleman was so fortunate as to meet with; I am acquainted with several officers of rank now in Angostura, and, through one or other of these, shall assuredly be able to secure you not only snug quarters, but also a respectable introduction to the general."

"Spoken like a true blue!" exclaimed sir Rourke, who, while the sailor was speaking, had fished out his rank from Tarleton. "In this beggarly country, sir, I shall esteem your acquaintance an honour. But where is Nap's quondam captain, the gallant chevalier, and honest Pestal-and-Mortar, with his cursed Welch name? Has the hero of the Moskwa fought shy on the banks of the Orinoco, and the son of St. Taffey held it more pleasant to return and pound pills for the goats of the principality, than run the risk of getting pounded himself in the forests of South America?"

When enlightened on this head, he evinced no sorrow for the unfortunate surgeon, but instantly began reviling him for his idiotism.—“By the holy!” he exclaimed, “I could have tould you that the fellow was a jackeen the moment I got a glance of his potato face. I went to prophecy bad luck to him on the first hint he gave of laving my protection, and honestly said as much, the day I lent him twenty dollars—all the money I could spare, by the same token. Blood and tunder! what a born idiot I was, to be after throwing away my money in such a manner! for I dare be sworn his kit, though sold off at prime cost, would not fetch half the sum. You’ll both remember, jintlemen, my lending him the twenty dollars—it was the second day after we landed at Grenada, when poor Ipecacuanha, but for the timely supply, would have had to make an eating-house of his own medicine-chest.”

His

His auditors, without hesitation, denied being privy to any such matter.

“ I’ll, anyhow, take my Bible-oath he had the dust,” resumed sir Rourke, “ and a scurvy reckoning I fear I am to have of it! I should be glad to know if his life was the only part of his property the murdering thieves made free with.”

“ I believe so,” answered Clifford, disgusted at the speaker’s avarice; “ at all events, the master of the schooner acknowledges having part of his luggage still on board.”

“ Then it’s proper it should be looked after as soon as possible,” returned sir Rourke, “ and I’m after thinking it will be the wisest plan to board her without delay. Yonder comes a canoe with some idle naked varmin in it, so I’ll be making free to hail it, and overhaul Taffey’s effects before I’m an hour oulder.”

He accordingly commenced hallooing and making signals to the native fisher-

men, who, guessing at rather than understanding his meaning, paddled to the shore. After a little demur, arising from ignorance of each other's language, captain Hillyard took upon himself the office of interpreter, and sir Rourke entered the canoe, humming—

“Taffey was a Welchman,
And Taffey was a thief;
Taffey came to my door,
And stole a leg of beef.”

The party he had left were unanimously of opinion that there was no truth whatever in his assertion of having lent twenty dollars to the unlucky surgeon, but that it was a mere fabrication, the drift of which was to make himself master of what little property the deceased had possessed; Clifford was the more assured of this, as he remembered Ap Rice declaring that O'Rourke had refused to assist him in a rather unhandsome manner; but as neither cared
what

what became of the goods and chattels, the Irishman was permitted to dispose of them as he thought proper.

Having thus got rid of the self-dubbed knight, under captain Hillyard's guidance they proceeded towards Angostura, the place where they were put on shore being a short distance from the town, which stands on the slope of a hill, and presents a very handsome range of buildings fronting the river. The stuccoed fronts and gay verandas brought Spain to the recollection of the strangers, and altogether its aspect was such as partly to dissipate the unfavourable impressions received of the country from the desolation of old Guiana. Before they had been many hours residents, however, they discovered that Angostura had little to boast of over its fallen neighbour; numerous ruined edifices betokened the ravages of war; the magnificent cathedral, destined never to be completed, stood a roofless and decaying

memento

memento of the demoralization of the times; and human bones, the dismal relics of that day on which the town had surrendered to the independent forces, lay bleaching in the sun-parched outskirts. Captain Hillyard gave them a sketch of that terrible day, and of the subsequent fate of its conqueror, whom his colleague Bolivar, on some trivial pretence, caused to be arrested, tried by a court-martial, and shot. In this anecdote the adventurers saw traits confirming the atrocities they had heard laid to the charge of the insurgent leaders while at Grenada.

On reaching the town, their friendly conductor bent his steps towards one of the handsomest edifices in the range facing the river; at its entrance he held a short parley with some native domestics, who ultimately, and with great respect, made way for his admission, beckoning at the same time on his companions to follow; they of course obeyed, and

and ascending a broad flight of steps, were conducted into a spacious open gallery on the second floor. This gallery, or terrace, looked into a square, in the area of which the lemon, the orange, and the fig, displayed their blossoms, and exhaled their odoriferous perfume. From this gallery they were ushered into a splendid hall, in which were grouped a number of native officers, but so miserably appavelled as to render it necessary for captain Hillyard to signify as much to his countrymen before they were aware of their rank. One of these, as soon as he saw Hillyard enter, quickly advanced, and with much warmth and courtesy of manner, held out his hand, and saluted him in English. His habiliments, like those of his compatriots, were patched and faded, but they could not conceal the deportment that declared him born to command. He was in the dawn of manhood, twenty being the utmost his age could be guessed at. In
person

person he was tall, slender, and symmetrical—in complexion of a deep but transparent brown—his hair dark and waving—his eyes black and brilliant, yet expressive of softness almost womanish. After a few minutes conversation with captain Hillyard he approached, and the Englishmen being presented by their friend, were kindly welcomed by the young officer, who was announced as don Ivo Marina. In excellent English, and with enthusiasm, he avowed the gratitude it became him to feel, in common with his countrymen, towards the strangers who so generously stood forward in the cause of Columbia and of liberty; lamented that the crowded state of the town should preclude good quarters being immediately assigned them; but added, that, until better could be found, they were heartily welcome to share the accommodation afforded by the house he occupied.—“I am,” concluded he, “about to pay my respects
to

to the governor, and shall not fail to report your arrival, and represent the necessity of paying you all due attention; I shall also see general Bermudez, and make arrangements for personally presenting you to that chief, as soon as you have recruited yourselves after the fatigues of your voyage."

The Englishmen gratefully acknowledged their sense of his kindness; but, though evidently pleased, the young American hastened to silence them.—
"Say no more, my friends," said he—
"I deserve no commendation for such trifling services, more especially as I am conscious that it is by selfishness I am principally actuated; for there are many, many ties that bind me to England and her children. I presume," continued he, pointing to the group at the other end of the hall, "you are not at present inclined to go through the ceremony of an introduction to these your future colleagues in arms; I shall therefore postpone

pone it, and put you in immediate possession of such quarters as I can command."

He accordingly reconducted them to the gallery, and, preceded by two domestics, advanced to its farther extremity, whence a door opened into a handsome dormitory, the windows of which, like those of the hall, gave access to a gay balcony looking down on the river. It contained no beds, these being an article of luxury almost unknown in Angostura, but in their stead were several hammocks suspended from the roof, and by their cleanliness inviting to repose. Various other pieces of furniture necessary to comfort and convenience were also in the apartment, and the two attendants seemed eager to receive orders that they might shew their readiness to obey.

"And now," said don Ivo, "captain Hillyard and I will leave you for an hour or two, and go make our joint report

port to the general; meanwhile make free with whatever you find in this house, and issue your orders as though it were your own. A point of etiquette requires me constantly to share the general's meals; nevertheless, such food as can be procured in a nearly-famished town, shall be prepared at whatever hour you choose to name. In a day or two this matter, along with many others, may come to be better regulated."

The guests reiterated their acknowledgments, and Clifford, turning to captain Hillyard, on whose honest intelligent face sat pleasure and perhaps pride, said—"It is to you we owe all this, and be assured your kindness is not bestowed on ungrateful hearts. Hitherto we did not try to conceal that our prepossessions were unfavourable to the independent cause, for rumour had brought to our ears many reports far from advantageous; but the deportment of don Ivo Marina is a tacit proof that matters have

have been grossly misrepresented, and that the nation we come to fight for is worthy of the liberty it desires. We rejoice to find ourselves mistaken, and by thus promptly confessing our error, seek to give a warrant of the sentiments with which we shall engage in the contest."

"In the name of my compatriots, I thank you for this candid avowal," returned don Ivo; "still I must not permit you to labour under misconceptions, however flattering to the patriot cause. Rumour doubtless blackens us more than we deserve, yet with shame I acknowledge that many of its exaggerated reports are founded on truth: atrocities, such as humanity shrinks from narrating, not unfrequently disgrace our arms; but these spring from the rooted animosity and bitterness subsisting between the contending parties, and are such as even the most powerful and most popular of our chiefs must tacitly countenance,

nance, in order to render the mutual malevolence terminable only with extermination. With the enemy it is a system to immolate, under circumstances the most flagitious, every human being who, either directly or indirectly, favours the independent cause; consequently our half-disciplined bands are goaded on to wreak their hate in acts of insatiable and savage retaliation.—

With my own eyes I have been compelled to witness sights the very recollection of which still chills my blood, and which, at the moment, made me blush that I was a man. But let us hope that these barbarities are drawing to a close, and that the outrages now committed against humanity will eventually purchase that freedom and security for which so many have already perished, and for which so many have yet to die.”

It was impossible not to admire the manly candour that distinguished these words,

words, and Clifford, as he gazed on the flashing eyes of the animated warrior, felt his heart bound towards him with strong regard. He would gladly have prolonged the conversation, but, aware that don Ivo might not find it convenient to remain longer, resisted the inclination, and the youth retired. Captain Hillyard followed him, but not before he had undertaken to send their luggage ashore, and also promised to use every exertion to procure M. L'Evali and his fair Eulalie similar accommodation.

The friends soon proved that don Ivo's attentions were not confined to mere words—their orders were obeyed with the same promptitude and punctuality as if he himself had issued them, and every circumstance concurred to shew how much reason they had for congratulation. In the course of two hours their baggage arrived, and, in addition to the seamen who had it in charge, sir Rourke O'Rourke, his lady, and

and the master of the schooner, gave it escort. Without waiting to be invited, and with all the nonchalance of a true campaigner, sir Rourke rolled his corporation into the room, closely followed by his rib.—“ By the powers, boys!” cried he, without waiting to see how he was received, “ you’ve had the luck of it, after all, to be quartered in such a glorious palazzo, as we used to say in Spain. Blood and ’ounds! how could it happen that I did not fall in with this don What-the-devil-do-you-call-him, instead of having to stuff lady O’Rourke and my swate self into a perfect pigstye, bad luck to it! But I’m rejoiced at your good fortune, boys—that I am; and merely looked in upon you to say as much, and to take you as witnesses against this rapscaillon of a deck-swabber, who is after houlding back my lawful property.”

The master of the schooner, who was the person here libelled, though scarcely understanding

understanding a word of this harangue, suspected sir Rourke was vilifying him, from his looks and gestures, and therefore stood forward in self-defence.—“ Senors,” said he, in Spanish, which both understood and spoke fluently, and pointing to the Irishman, “ I have reason to believe this person is questioning my honesty, in regard to my retaining the luggage of your unfortunate countryman, who lost his life in the bocca of the river. I am aware, from his own confession, that one of you defrayed the passage of the deceased from Grenada to the Main, and therefore have thought proper to keep possession of his effects until I should ascertain who is best authorized to receive them.”

“ Now, by Jasus !” exclaimed sir Rourke, rudely interrupting him, “ you’ll be after waiting till your better have done spaking, ould Cut-the-wind ! What think you, jintlemen, of this skip-jack having the audacity to deny, point blank,
my

my right to remove my property?—all that I have for the twenty good dollars I lent that pigeon-livered jackeen, doctor David Ap Jones Ap Rice—God rest his soul, and confound his break-wind name! Och! och! if I could have foreseen that my precious jinglers were only to go to fatten his ugly carcase, to make it the better a feast for the alligators of the Orinoco, the devil burn me but he should have finished his life on sparer diet!—Success to your jolly face, captain Tarleton! it's yourself that's the friend a soldier should meet with when he gets his property embargoed by such a graceless picaroon. I'll be sworn now you're laughing at the scoundrel's impudence, and can take your affidavit any day, that, as a creditor, I am entitled to arrest all that the Spaniards and the alligators have left of David Ap Jones Ap Rice."

"I know nothing of the matter," answered Tarleton, briefly, and laughing immoderately, partly at sir Rourke's effrontery,

effrontery, and partly at the ridiculous figure presented in his lady. In order to set off the tawdry habiliments she had brought with her from the Green Isle, she had stuck into her bonnet a profusion of scarlet, yellow, and other bright-coloured feathers, which her husband had plundered from the richly-plumaged birds he had shot in his voyage up the Orinoco; with this splendid crest waving gracefully to and fro, she kept sailing majestically up and down the apartment like a huge cockatoo, and no sense of good-breeding had power to restrain Tarleton's mirth.

“Now that's unfortunate,” observed sir Rourke, when he found that the latter was not inclined to countenance his imposition. “But some people have got cursed bad memories, as I know to my sorrow. There's my countryman the duke, for instance, and my old Spanish comarado, Morrice Quill; but more of that when I have brought this hum-
bugging

bugging fustilarian of a skipper to haul down his piratical colours. Now there's you, captain Clifford—I'll stake my honour you remember the circumstance in question."

"Then you will inevitably forfeit it," returned Clifford, "for I never heard a whisper of this debt until I had it from your own lips not three hours ago; indeed, if I recollect aright, Mr. Ap Rice complained to me that you had coarsely refused to give him assistance."

"It was exactly what you might expect the vile heart of him to vomit forth," exclaimed sir Rourke. "Blood alive! if I ever more lend my money to a spalpeen that has been reared on leeks, may all the goats on Plinlimmon keep carnival in my pockets! But I'm perfectly aisy, boys—perfectly aisy; the immortal duke himself would not dare to doubt my veracity. Thunder and blazes! did he not compliment me to my face (and a precious face it was with

blood and gunpowder), when I marched up to him on the ramparts of Ciudad Rodrigo, and publicly congratulated him on the victory? Jenny, woman, you'll remember that, though the jintlemen have forgot my lending the money?"

"Surely, surely," answered Jenny, complaisantly—"I mind it a' weel eneuch. You told me the story from beginning to end, sitting in the laigh room, and just as ye had it half-an-hour afore frae drunk serjeant O'Sullivan. Ye maybe hinna forgot that ye sat havering about Spain and Portingal till ye got as fou as a beast."

"Call a halt, woman—call a halt!" roared sir Rourke, horrified at this *exposé*. "Lady O'Rourke, jintlemen, finds the warm climate play the devil with her memory as well as yourselves. But come, you mosquito-bitten sinner!" added he, addressing the skipper, "how is this cockahooping to end? Are you to yield up the remains of David Ap
Jones

Jones Ap Rice quietly and dacently? or must I report you to the port-admiral, and take the worth of it out of your parchment hide?"

"You perceive, senors," said the sailor, addressing himself to the Englishmen, "on what disadvantageous terms I stand with this man; it is evident he abuses me, but let him beware of a Carracian's wrath. The property may possibly be his, but until you signify as much, I cannot consent to resign my charge."

"Then let him have it, captain," said Clifford, who, though suspecting imposition, could not prove it; "I have no wish to claim aught belonging to our unfortunate countryman, as the little assistance I afforded him was given without hope of being repaid. You have my permission to make what arrangements you please."

"Is the rapparee listening to raison?" exclaimed sir Rourke, impatiently. "If he palavers longer, I'm off to the admiral."

“ In my opinion, he is the most reasonable person of the two,” replied Clifford. “ Let me recommend more temperate language, sir Rourke, for the abusive epithets you lavish on an honourable man do no credit to your breeding. Mr. Ap Rice’s effects are to be delivered up to you, as I have no inclination to contest your claim; so good-morning; do not let us detain you.”

“ Och, murder !” returned sir Rourke, “ if you be after measuring an Irishman’s breeding by the oaths he tips and the good-humoured names he gives his friends, you’ll give but scurvy measure to the jinerality. But I’m your debtor to the end of time for your handsome conduct, and if I ever mend my manners, it shall be on your account. Come, ould Blusterchops! about ship, and be spooming. Lady O’Rourke, wont you be after giving over swinging about there, like a magpie on a turf-stack, and wish the jintleman good-morning? But, tunder and ’ounds! who have we here?”

and

and he popped his head over the balcony to discover what produced the low bustle in front of the edifice. Tarleton also looked out with a view to reconnoître, and perceived that it was occasioned by the return of don Ivo. This circumstance was immediately intimated to sir Rourke, accompanied by a broad hint that his company was no longer desirable; but he made no effort at retreat. —“ I’m right glad it is the don,” said he; “ for as we must sooner or later be acquainted, there’s no use deferring the plasure. Lady O’Rourke, wont you be quiet now, and put yourself in an elegant attitude when you hear his excellency at the door?”

—“ You must excuse us, sir, if we decline presenting you,” said Clifford, offended at his effrontery; “ we are intruders ourselves on don Ivo Marina’s hospitality, and cannot, at this time, take upon us to introduce any one.”

“ Don’t be giving yourself the least

trouble, my dear fellow," returned sir Rourke; "sure and I'll be ill off when I want your introduction, while I've a good Irish tongue in my mouth. Let Rourke O'Rourke alone for knowing how to deal with don or hidalgo; watch me, and I'll be shot if you do not say I do the thing nately."

Clifford would have retorted with severity, had not sounds in the adjoining gallery announced don Ivo's approach. In a few seconds an attendant entered to say that his master offered them a visit; and scarcely had he delivered his message, when the latter made his appearance. The captain of the schooner modestly withdrew, but sir Rourke and his rib kept their ground without flinching.

"I hope you make no ceremony in issuing your commands," said don Ivo, advancing into the room with that graceful familiarity which so well became him in his capacity of host; "at all events,
I shall

I shall speedily discover if you let modesty get the better of good sense, for I intend, with your leave, to enjoy your society for the ensuing hour. But I beg pardon—you are engaged, and I fear I intrude.” He bowed as he spoke, first to the nodding crest of lady O'Rourke, and then to the cross on the breast of her husband. The paroquet feathers did obeisance in return, and the knight of the cross made an equally-low *salaam* as he hove his jolly figure more completely *vis-à-vis*, exclaiming—“ I entreat your excellency will be after staying until I have done the handsome by myself and these my young friends, who have too much modesty for their calling, as you may aisely perceive. I am sir Rourke O'Rourke, knight of the Tower and Sword, and late captain-commandant in the armies of his Britannic majesty—a man who, after assisting the invincible Wellington, my countryman, to humble the pride of the mighty Napoleon, and

shedding his blood in many a hard-fought field for the cause of suffering Europe, now comes to lay down his life for freedom and South America. And to make one mouthful of the matter, this is my affectionate and legitimate spouse, lady Flora Ann Roden O'Toole Mactavish O'Rourke—a female of illustrious parentage, as her names may tell you, and as keen a spanker as ever North Britain sent forth to follow the fortunes of an honourable soldier. Lady O'Rourke, why don't you be after saying something pat to his excellency?"

Don Ivo's knowledge of English customs and manners was not sufficient to enable him to detect the absurdity of this speech in its fullest extent, but Tarleton's involuntary burst of laughter in a certain measure enlightened him; nevertheless, he expressed himself proud of sir Rourke's acquaintance, offered some trifling civilities to his lady, and then perceiving that Clifford looked disconcerted,

concerted, made a second motion to retire. But sir Rourke was not to be thus easily put off, for he interposed himself between him and the door, shouting—“Now don’t let us be driving you from your own house, your excellency, or I’m off in a jiffy. I should like rarely to have some confabulation with you, touching the state of the patriot army, the system of politics pursued in the organization of the infant republic, and—and—bother me if I can remember what else! During the last campaign in Spain (I mean when we were fighting in the Pyrenees), light troops were all the go with the duke: light troops, sir—light troops are the thing. I always served as a flanker, and was no despicable hand with a rifle myself; I have made more than one spy bite the dust in my time, as lady O’Rourke (excuse me for shortening her name) can easily testify.”

“To be sure I can,” observed the lady; “for muckle occasion hae I to

mind it. Didna I get a bonny fleg when I heard ye had shot auld Shellah Molloy in the bog of Knocknacoppul, the first morning ye gaed out to practeeze wi' yer rifle-gun? and wisna I like to run clean daft when I was told that you were in custody, and to stand yer trial for the murder? For certain, it was proved that the goose ye were firing at was clean oot o' the direction o' the honest 'oman, and that it was an ugly lump o' a stane that turned the bullet; but still it was a great shoot—it aye killed something. As to the men ye say ye killed, they are oot o' my wye—only I wad advise ye, gudeman, not to be over rash in meddling wi' a rifle agen. Dinna forget the bog of Knocknacoppul and Shellah Molloy.”

“ Don Ivo,” interposed Clifford, no longer able to remain a silent spectator, “ I find I must interfere, however unwillingly, in this discussion. This lady and gentleman were passengers on board
the

the same vessel that brought us from England, and, as subjects of the same government, are entitled to our services in a strange country. At a future period I should have taken upon me to introduce them to your notice, but sir Rourke was averse to delay, and has consequently taken the trouble on himself. The chief reason he intruded on the privacy of your dwelling was to settle, through our mediation, some dispute existing between him and the master of a schooner lately arrived from Grenada——”

“By the powers of Moll Kelly!” exclaimed sir Rourke, interrupting him as he discovered, for the first time, that the sailor had disappeared, “the buccaneer has taken leg-bail! Come along, Jenny, woman—come along, or Pitch-and-oakum will be on board before we can reach the water side. Good-bye to his excellency don Ivo Marina! good-bye to you, jintlemen!—The rapparee! the deck-swabber!”

He

He departed, pulling his better half after him like a piece of live lumber, and he was heard sputtering words of abuse against the skipper until he was fairly out of the house. Don Ivo laughed heartily when made acquainted with his character and the altercation concerning the wardrobe of doctor Ap Rice, but the insight given went not so far as to engender doubts of his military talents; if he could manage to keep the secret himself, the Englishmen had no desire to divulge it.

“And now,” said don Ivo, when this subject was set aside, “I have to state that general Bermudez will give you audience to-morrow; and that, through captain Hillyard, whose merit is universally acknowledged, he is duly impressed with a sense of your deserts. I believe it will depend greatly on yourselves whether you accompany Bermudez to Cumana, or penetrate still farther into the interior, and join the supreme chief in the mission of San Fernando. From
selfish

selfish motives, I should be glad you adopted the latter plan; though, even admitting you should not do so, I shall still be gratified by making you the bearers of a message to some dear friends in the neighbourhood of Cumana. My duty leads me no further with Bermudez than this place, and as, in a few days, I must reascend the river as high as the mission in which Bolivar has now his head-quarters, I anticipate very keenly the pleasure your society would afford me. If you prefer to follow my fortunes, I shall personally have the honour of presenting you to the captain-general, and, should you so incline, in all probability be able to attach you to the cavalry regiment I command."

Both expressed the grateful sentiments the kind interest he took in their concerns gave birth to, and unhesitatingly declared they would bear him company to San Fernando, in preference to following any other route. As to serving under

under his command, there seemed to be a serious objection in their never having acted as cavalry officers.

“ I respect you for the confession,” observed don Ivo, “ but hold the excuse as quite nugatory. You must not imagine that you are about to join an army such as you have been accustomed to serve with in Europe. I suppose you both sit a horse firmly, and, from the country that gave you birth, must be constitutionally brave. My men have no other qualifications to boast of; they are mounted on horses worn down with bad treatment and incessant fatigue—are almost naked, wretchedly accoutred, and irregularly armed—indeed many of them depend on no weapon but the lance, whose simple construction renders it more easily procured than the sword or carbine. Be not afraid, therefore, of appearing at a loss among such troops; I could almost venture to say that, in a short time, you will be the most valuable

able officers I command. The gallant young Frenchman who has accompanied you from Europe is also to bear us company to San Fernando; I have been on board captain Hillyard's vessel, made the chevalier my friend, and, for want of spare accommodation in this house, have quartered him and his pretty wife on a French family of respectability, where both are sure to meet with marked attention. He talks of carrying that timid fragile girl along with him, but he knows not the country he has to traverse; to confess the truth, it was her evident helplessness and beauty that so strongly interested me in their favour; the contour of her features, and, above all, the sparkle of her full dark eye, reminded me of a sister whom I highly value, and for whom I often tremble."

"We have both lamented the probable fate of that delicate and lovely woman," said Clifford; "but the chevalier, though he has seen war under its
most

most horrible aspect, appears totally free from alarm; he is as brave, as generous, and as noble-minded as we could desire a brother in arms to be, and I prophecy that, before long, he will prove a valuable accession to the patriot army."

"In that case, if the captain-general becomes not jealous of my partiality for Europeans," observed don Ivo, "we must have him also attached to the regiment of Marina. And now I must take my leave for the day, to-morrow present you to Bermudez, and then get ready, with all dispatch, for our voyage to San Fernando. Look!" and he pointed to a number of large boats moored in a natural basin nearly opposite the house and communicating with the river, "you may perceive the flecheras which are intended for our reception already in waiting." He withdrew, and for the remainder of the day left his guests to pass the time as they listed.

CHAPTER X.
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No friend ever did me so much good, or enemy so much harm, but I repaid him with interest. PLUTARCH.

ACCORDING to his promise, don Ivo, on the following day, presented the Englishmen to general Bermudez. Their reception was gracious, and, as they had been led to expect, a proposition was made for them to accompany the army destined for Cumana; but this they, of course, declined, on the score of being anxious to report personally their arrival to the supreme chief; they rejected this invitation the more readily, from a sensation of mistrust and dislike being engendered by the appearance of Bermudez; for, in his huge stature, muscular limbs, and savage expression of countenance,

nance, there was something that assured them report did not defame when it called him ferocious and cruel. They attended at his levee in a sort of military undress, which, plain as it was, rendered them more than respectable in the eyes of the native officers; but the chevalier L'Evali, whose presentation took place at the same time, eclipsed all by the splendour of his uniform; he wore the full costume of the French regiment to which he had belonged, and told, with pride and grief sparkling in his eyes, that in that same jacket he had, on the famous *Champ de Mai*, received the eagles of his corps from the hands of his emperor. When he had an opportunity of privately conversing with Clifford, he professed his ardour to enlist in the patriot service greatly abated; and even don Ivo Marina, though he frankly acknowledged his obligations to him, did not altogether suit his taste as a commanding officer—"He is a generous-hearted

hearted fellow, I allow," said he, "but he has too little experience to have a command. Only figure to yourself a mere boy (for what else is he?) who cannot have seen more than bush-fighting, or mayhap the encounter of a few squadrons of cavalry, pretending to head such men as ourselves, who have served years of apprenticeship under the mightiest of our European chiefs! But, even setting the absurdity of this aside, I see little to tempt us to penetrate farther into the country, in which existence, making the best of it, is but a foretaste of purgatory. I vow to God, the pinching frost and famine of Russia itself failed to fret me so continually as those cursed mosquitoes, which, from morn to night, and from night to morn, mercilessly pierce my flesh. And suppose we do push on to San Fernando, and meet with a gracious reception from Bolivar, what benefit accrues? we shall receive commissions, no doubt; but from whence comes

comes our pay—whence those supplies without which an army cannot exist? You see colonels, and field officers of all descriptions, stalking about with a ragged blanket thrown over their shoulders in lieu of uniform; what then must be the condition of the army in general? what must soon be our condition, who are to serve in a junior rank? I need not add, that it is not from a fear of hardship and privation I point out these things; it is because I plainly foresee that no ultimate advantage can be reaped—that we are to risk limbs and life for a country which cannot, will not reward us.”

“I apprehend there is much truth in what you say,” returned Clifford; “but, for my own part, I feel it is too late to repent. Besides, to be plain with you, neither Tarleton nor myself calculated on speedy remuneration; we have our time at our command, no ties to call us home, have conceived a regard for don  
Ivo,

Ivo, and will follow him. But with you the case is different; you have a wife to protect and shield—a delicate helpless female, who, should you be accidentally cut off, will be left destitute in a strange land, the prey of a thousand miseries. If you are not resolved to give up the adventure, I would most earnestly recommend you to facilitate madame L'Evali's return to Europe or the West Indies, or at least to prevail on her to remain in Angostura."

The chevalier mused for a few seconds, and then, in one of those versatile flights for which he was remarkable, exclaimed—"No, no—I cannot part with Eulalie; she would break her heart if I was to ship her off without me. To leave her in Angostura, is entrusting all I value to the chances of war, for it may be pillaged by the enemy to-morrow; and to retreat, while others confront the enemy is not my creed. Come, come—fortune will stand by me yet, I hope; and though,  
as

as I said before, I do mortally dislike the *tout ensemble* of these blanketeer colonels, San Fernando shall be my destination."

"By the powers, honey, and there's a pair of us then!" interjoined sir Rourke O'Rourke, who had approached them during this conference, which took place as they walked from the general's to their quarters. "The supreme chief, I am tould, is on the eve of giving the Godoys \* battle, and will feel main glad, I'll be swore, at our joining him so opportunely. But, blood alive, captain Clifford! let me tell you how I dished that piccaroon, captain Tata. Sure I found him waiting civilly at the door, when I slipped off so nately from don Ivo; and the son-of-a-rope's-end was in such a funk about my threatening him with the admiral, that he surrendered the property without another cheep. I have the whole under lock and key now, thanks

\* A cant term for the Spanish troops, in use among the independents.





holy! I gave it him—lady Flora Ann Roden O'Toole Mactavish O'Rourke. Ha! ha! ha! I would thank any hidalgo in Castile to match that."

"A noble name, in truth!" said the chevalier, laughing; "it is quite long enough to impose on any one—so no wonder it confounded a colonel of insurgent cavalry."

"Upon my conscience," resumed sir Rourke, "it would have done your heart good to see how civilly he behaved to her ladyship afterwards; and the woman herself was so flattered by his attention and the tearing sound of it, that she insists on being called nothing else for the time to come. But we were talking of clothing, which brings to mind the pretty trim in which I returned from Spain in eighteen hundred and fourteen; you never in your life saw such a figure; I had often an inclination to exchange rags with some of the scarecrows I saw swinging on the  
lazy-

lazy-beds to keep the varmin from the potatoes; in the elbow of my best regimental jacket was a patch of gray cloth, various parts of my gray pantaloons were clouted with scarlet, and—and—but, troth! I've forgotten all the patches, they were so numerous."

"You shewed but little ingenuity in the repairs," observed the chevalier, "otherwise you would have patched the jacket with the scarlet, and the trowsers with the gray."

"Now, botheration to you!" exclaimed sir Rourke, "are you after thinking that a man, who had all the internal economy of a regiment to attend to (for the adjutant was a blank without me), could be particular in tailor work? Och! och! I am ashamed of some people's want of consideration. But I am sorry, jintlemen, I must deprive you of an excellent anecdote I have on the tip of my tongue, for the turtle soup lady O'Rourke is cooking for dinner will be ready by

this time; I got the finest turtle in the world for a mere trifle, and look upon it as corn in Egypt, for my stomach rebels every time I attempt to eat their cursed *tasso* \*. Lady O'Rourke used to say she could not exist without butcher-meat; but, by the lord Harry! she has it now to her heart's content—*carne! carne! carne!* is the cry, morning, noon, and night; I often listen, and fancy the very birds shriek *carne!* for the taste seems to be natural, from the lord of the creation down to the vilest mosquito. But the soup will be ready—so I'm off. Remind me at another time, captain Clifford, and I will give you the story I must now postpone; you have only to mention Morrice Quill and the town of Salvatierra, and it is yours." He strutted off as he concluded, leaving them thankful at his precipitate retreat.

"I scarcely know," said Clifford, "whether

\* Dried strips of beef, a common article of food on the Spanish Main.

“ whether to think him most rogue or fool; at all events, I can safely aver that never in my life did I meet with his equal in sheer downright effrontery: his language is vulgar, his remarks impertinent, and his familiarity disgusting; yet, somehow or other, he is tolerated, when a less offensive man would meet severe chastisement; I am often on the point of checking him, yet, in the very act, feel perforce obliged to smile, and am finally disarmed by the reflection that he is incorrigible, and beneath my notice.”

“ Our opinions exactly coincide,” said the Frenchman. “ His tongue is his weapon, both of offence and defence, and he handles it expertly, and with the more impunity, because he is impervious to an affront. Broad vulgar humour he certainly possesses, and it is mingled with a dash of originality, which, as you observe, compels to mirth; but, take him all in all, he is, I apprehend, but a

mere braggadocio and rattleskull, *sans* bravery, *sans* principle, *sans* any thing claiming respect."

The approach of don Ivo and Tarleton, who had been loitering in the rear, put an end to the Irishman's dissection; and the chevalier left them, to repair to his own quarters. Through don Ivo's exertions, he had been accommodated in the house of a French merchant, who, affrighted at the disorganized state of the country, and the immoral code of society thereby introduced, lived in the utmost retirement with his two daughters. Owing to this circumstance, madame L'Evali commenced her campaigning far more agreeably than she had been led to anticipate.

Three days after their presentation to general Bermudez, don Ivo announced that all was ready for his departure for San Fernando. They accordingly embarked on board the flechera \* appointed to

\* A kind of gun-boat.



to receive them, and stood up the river. Two other barks sailed at the same time, in one of which was sir Rourke and his lady; looking upon don Ivo as a silly good-humoured fellow, likely to do him many good offices, he had entreated to be added to his party, but was refused, on the score that the vessel was overcrowded without him. This excuse was not made without reason, for, in addition to the Englishmen, don Ivo's *flechera* had on board the chevalier and madame L'Evali, and several native officers. One of these was a naval commander, of high rank—a man of most unprepossessing aspect; he was of Herculean stature, and his dingy complexion proclaimed him more nearly allied to African than to Castilian blood; while a frightful slash which he had received in battle, having smitten out an eye and otherwise shockingly disfigured him, rendered absolutely hideous his naturally-repulsive countenance. Don Ivo

manifested a remarkable degree of restlessness and vexation when he understood commodore Valveyde was to be his *compagnon de voyage*, and Clifford fancied he could detect a savage grin of exultation and malevolence diffused over the latter's visage in return; the arrangements, however, underwent no alteration, and they bade adieu to Angostura.

Notwithstanding the exposure and inconvenience they were subjected to, owing to the open and crowded state of the boat, the Europeans experienced great gratification in beholding the wonders which nature so lavishly displays in the recesses of that vast country into which they were penetrating. By day they employed themselves in watching the magnificent vistas their course hourly presented—in rousing the numerous alligators, who, floating down with the current, lay as motionless on the surface of the water as the branchless logs they resembled—

resembled—and in admiring the strange and gorgeously-plumaged birds which hovered around, varying in size from the minute humming-bird to the bright-coloured and stately flamingo. At sunset they regularly came to anchor, and disembarked. Hammocks for them to repose in were suspended from the trees, and large fires kindled to intimidate the savage monsters of the forest, and to keep off the tantalizing clouds of mosquitoes, whose carnival may be said to commence with nightfall.

Often, when seated by this watch-fire, did the Englishmen recall to mind nights similarly passed among the sierras of Spain and Portugal; to gratify the insatiable curiosity of don Ivo, they mutually assisted each other in describing Europe, and the astonishing events of which it had latterly been the theatre; and, in return, he gave them many a strange and mournful tale of the horrible calamities which had desolated the Span-

nish colonies, in their struggles to throw off the tyrannical yoke of the mother country. It was during one of these periods of unshackled communication, that, seated under a lofty bombax, and with the bright flame of the night-fire flashing on forest and river, he disclosed the nature of that aversion reciprocally subsisting between him and commodore Valveyde.—“I shun him,” said he, “because I abhor his character and dread his malignity. You come from a happy land, where man’s heart is never brutalized to the level of a tiger, and where those implacable spirits our tropic suns engender are wholly unknown. I have spoken before of a sister, the idol of her father, and the only fraternal tie Heaven has given me; this Valveyde wooed her for his bride, was of course rejected, and had subsequently the audacity to endeavour to gain, by treachery and force, what his solicitations could not purchase. My father hated him as cordially as he deserves;

deserves ; but not so the supreme chief, who finds his temerity, and, I may add, his ferocity, very powerful and tremendous engines when he chooses to move them. My sister was ordered, by authority her parent dared not resist, to look upon Valveyde as her future husband, and her doom was all but sealed, when I stood forward to her rescue. I was at a distance, and with the army under the gallant Paez, when the intelligence reached me that our darling was to be sacrificed to this one-eyed monster—to a man who, in my hearing, had repeatedly boasted of having voluntarily devoured human flesh, and who avowed himself capable of the most inhuman crimes. I made my injuries known to my general, with his consent headed the regiment of Marina, which had been embodied by my father, and traversing the country with amazing celerity, formed a cordon of troops round my paternal dwelling, at the very moment Inez was

awaiting the completion of her wretchedness with the horrid composure of despair. Valveyde appeared to demand his bride, and threatened to denounce me as a traitor; but I dared him to his teeth, smote him with the flat side of my sword, in token that he was unworthy of falling by it, and recklessly bade him go tell his abettor that, before my sister was surrendered, it would be requisite to cut his way to her with his army. The chief knew this was no idle threat—he knew that the gallant Paez was my friend, and that, by crushing me, insect though I was, such dissension might be sown among his forces as might eventually overthrow all his mighty projects. Suffice it to say, that my prompt action and firmness went not without its reward; Valveyde was recommended to seek comfort in some other quarter, and to deport himself with temperance and amity towards his vanquisher, while my submission was graciously accepted without



out comment. Since then, my father and sister have remained in the deepest seclusion at a small villa in the neighbourhood of Cumana, claiming, by their personal helplessness and inoffensive demeanour, a sort of neutrality in the present contest. The noble property the former once possessed is, however, seriously curtailed; but *that* I heed not, while they escape more horrible misfortunes; no night passes over my head in which I do not implore Heaven to place them in safety in Britain—that country of my ancestors, which I so much desire to visit, yet fear I am never destined to behold.”

The Englishmen expressed their surprise at his concluding words; they had frequently marvelled at the fluency with which he conversed in their native language, and felt flattered by the partiality he entertained for their country, yet had always supposed the first to be an accidental

dental acquirement, and the latter to be its natural result.

“ By no means,” said don Ivo, in reply to their comments ; “ I acquired English, because my forefathers had spoken it ; and I loved the country where it was in use, as a land from whence came every thing noble, great, and virtuous. My father is a Briton, and though long self-expatriated, still glories in the name. Since the unhappy country of his adoption fell a prey to anarchy and war, and more especially since he was incapacitated from being of service to the cause he favours, he has often avowed an earnest longing to return to dust quietly in his native soil. With the hope that he may, at a future time, be able to indulge this desire, he has, for years, been remitting money to England—a wise precaution, considering that his defenceless state leaves him to be stripped by both royalist and independent.

dependent. One reason why he hesitates, is his aversion to leave me behind him; another, the opposition he anticipates from the supreme director, through the machinations of Valveyde. A royalist bullet, well aimed at the heart of his son, would be the quickest mode of fixing his determination; were I to fall, I am well assured he would instantly demand his passport, and quit America for ever."

"Then I trust he will not hurriedly revisit England," said Tarleton. "But if your father is anxious to lay his bones in his native country, why should you be a preventive? Toss your sword at the head of that hideous descendant of Polyphemus, Valveyde—leave him and his compatriots to knock their brains out, and hold cannibal routs as they think proper, and, with what haste you may, whisk your father and sister across the Atlantic."

"I scarcely think my father would  
accede

accede to your plan, were I to recommend its adoption," returned don Ivo, smiling; "strongly as his memory clings to the security and the virtues of his natal soil, it does not wean him into forgetfulness of what is due to his honour and Columbia. At the breaking out of this intestine war, he was amongst the first to spurn at despotism and tyranny. His rank, wealth, and local connexions (having intermarried with and inherited the property of one of the noblest families in New Andalusia), rendered him an important personage on either side, and the patriots soon found they had gained a skilful and enterprising chief. He commanded a division of the army, and under his eye, while yet a mere boy, I first saw battle, and death. A severe wound, which deprived him of a hand, and otherwise injured him, ultimately drove him from the field; but, on resigning his command, he pledged the word of a soldier that I should fill his place in the

patriot

patriot ranks, until I either got my head cloven, or saw the enemy completely vanquished. On this account he conceives that I am bound to stand by the patriot banner; for though displeased with the supreme director, and disgusted at the atrocities the troops commit, he still leans to the side of independence. As this partiality and his former services are well known, he is frequently in jeopardy from the royalist; but, disabled by his wounds, and, above all, protected by a royalist officer of rank, who owes him a debt of gratitude, he has hitherto escaped. When general Bermudez sits down before Cumana with his troops, his situation will be still more secure; for that chief is his friend, and the seclusion of *Il Asilo* will consequently be held sacred. God send that it may never be violated !”

His auditors fervently responded amen to this invocation, and the speaker's eyes filled with tears as he remembered his  
home

home.—“ You are my brothers, from this hour,” said he, grasping a hand of each, “ and, if danger gathers darker over Il Asilo, shall be my coadjutors in its salvation. And now let us seek our hammocks, for, see, the bending of the cross tells us that midnight is past.” He pointed to the beautiful constellation called the Cross of the South, the inclination of which shewed it had passed the meridian. The Englishmen were already familiar with this timepiece of the desert, by which the natives of equinoctial America regulate the hours of darkness, and they accordingly betook themselves to rest.

A week passed over monotonously but pleasantly, and still the termination of their voyage was remote. The river occasionally expanded into vast sheets of water, and when the wind was high, which was frequently the case, the flechera ran great hazard of being engulfed. The monsters swarming round her  
pointed



pointed out the probable fate of the crew; yet commodore Valveyde, who was an expert swimmer, regularly bathed, as if he was on the most friendly understanding with the cannibals of the deep. At length they entered a spacious basin formed by the river, and the Bocca Inferno, one of the most intimidating rapids of the Orinoco, appeared ahead. Two gigantic columns of rock, shooting up in the narrow channel into which the river is confined by two rugged islands at the higher extremity of the lake, act as the jaws of this tremendous gorge, through which the great body of the stream is precipitated with frightful impetuosity, well entitling it to the local designation of the Mouth of Hell. The periodical rising of the Orinoco had already commenced, and the current, fierce and turbid, bore on its bosom the spoil of the untrodden forests it had traversed; immense trees, deprived of their branches by the chafing of the rocks, were momentarily

tarily vomited into the basin that received the infuriated river, and instantaneously sucked into the raging whirlpools that circumvolved on each side. Nor were these the only terrors of the Bocca Inferno; the lake by which it was approached swarmed with all the astonishing varieties of animal life which characterize the tropical regions of the occidental Continent—as if instinct actuated them to assemble in the haunts where they were surest of finding prey; the enormous manatee and the porpoise rolled their unwieldy bulk on all sides, the cayman lay basking on the surface in treacherous lethargy, and the water-snakes in myriads sported before the prow of the flechera. Such of the crew as had made the voyage before, looked on this impressive scene with comparative apathy; but those to whom it was new beheld it with surprise, not unmingled with dread.

As, with every sail set and a stiff breeze

breeze impelling them onward, they stood into the gorge of one of the minor rapids, it being impossible to stem the awful strength of the great bocca, commodore Valveyde sternly desired the steersman to resign his post, and seized the helm. At that moment every eye was so anxiously cast ahead, that Clifford alone remarked this circumstance, and the horrible glance with which Valveyde at the same time surveyed don Ivo; his heart instantly misgave him, and he hastened to acquaint the latter with the change. Don Ivo started, uttered a few unconnected words in praise of the commodore's seamanship, and then intently scanned his countenance; the scrutiny was decisive, for he immediately exclaimed—"I understand him—we are lost!" and rushing forward as the gush of the rapid began to be felt, he authoritatively commanded Valveyde to relinquish the helm to the proper steersman.

Valveyde rolled his solitary eye over  
him

him with appalling tranquillity, as he said, in return—"Silence! silence, youth! the helm can be trusted to no hand more experienced. I know too well the value of the cargo we have on board, to depend on the pilotage of a less wary eye, or the steadiness of a less nervous arm."

"I can divine your diabolical intents, Valveyde," retorted don Ivo, "for they are vividly portrayed on that hideous front. You mean—but, thank Heaven! if I perish, you cannot escape. Though the water is your native element, yet trust not too much to cheating the whirlpools and the cayman. Ruffian, quit the helm! or I shall cause you to be cast overboard, to feed the alligators!"

"They may soon have their meal," said Valveyde, still resolutely retaining his hold; "and if by accident I should even hurl the flechera through the bocca, I shall not disgrace myself by the timidity of a boy. Keep up a good heart, trembler! for I, Ignatio Valveyde, the  
man

man whom your puny arm once dared to smite, have before cheated the whirlpools and the cayman, when all on board the bark that carried me were overwhelmed and devoured. But look ahead to where the different rapids concentrate into one; when there, I will quit the helm—but not till then, though the Virgin herself were here to steer us.”

A strong breeze rushing with violence through the narrow strait, was fast bearing them onward during this altercation, and it was evident to all that, on reaching the point alluded to by Valveyde, the most trifling variation in the course would consign them to destruction, by running the flechera into the suction of the main stream, when she must inevitably be precipitated through the awful gate. The crew, however, perfectly relied on the commodore's skill, and, unsuspecting of the deadly intents of his heart, submissively left the vessel to his guidance. Rendered half-frantic by the conviction

conviction of their mortal jeopardy, don Ivo advanced with a view to displace him by force; but Valveyde was on the watch—he coolly bore the blow inflicted, and while he firmly grasped the rudder with one hand, promptly beat back the assailant with the other. Don Ivo staggered beneath the weight of his Herculean arm, and would have sunk down, but for Clifford.—“If that monster steers us five minutes longer,” he aspirated, in a faint voice, “we are sacrificed to his revenge. You may perceive the purpose of his soul, in the glittering of his eye and in the bristling of his hair. Well, well was I aware that, sooner or later, he would repay with interest my contemptuous blow.”

“Then another effort must be made for life,” exclaimed Clifford, withdrawing his support. “Tarleton! L’Evali! look to seizing the rudder when the madman falls! I will cut him down, or perish.”

As



As he spoke, he caught hold of and unsheathed his sabre. There was no time for parley, for Valveyde, with his unemployed hand, was already waving his glittering hanger in defiance. He adroitly warded off the first blow, and a grin of fiendish exultation spread over his visage as he began to wear the flechera into the main stream; but the second was more dextrously dealt, and fell on his temple. For a short space he continued to flourish his weapon before his bleeding face, and then sunk down in the boat as Tarleton caught the rudder, and resigned it into the hands of the proper steersman.

So quickly had Valveyde been attacked and defeated, that none of the crew had had time for interference; and when the combat ended, don Ivo's approbation of what had taken place was sufficient to exonerate and protect Clifford from any subsequent retaliation the adherents of the vanquished man might

incline to. When raised up and restored to animation, the hurt was examined, and proved to have been rather stunning than deep, and by no means dangerous. As there was no surgeon on board, the Englishmen had to officiate in that capacity to the extent of their abilities, and succeeded in stanching and binding up the wound. While this was effecting, Valveyde shewed the utmost tractability, and, either from stupor or sullenness, remained obstinately silent.—When his attendants had exhausted their chirurgical skill, he removed apart from the other passengers; thus betraying his disappointment, and the latent malignity he nourished for gratification at a more fitting season. The rapids of the Bocca Inferno were safely surmounted, and in a few hours after they moored, for the night, in one of those spacious reaches where the current was scarcely perceptible.

On the ensuing day they left the great  
Orinoco,

Orinoco, and entered the Apure, a tributary stream of considerable magnitude, sixty miles from the *débouche* of which San Fernando is situated. As in the Orinoco, and even in greater numbers, their course was tracked by shoals of amphibious monsters, and they frequently descried the blood-thirsty jaguar prowling on the thickly-wooded banks; myriads of unknown birds darkened the air, the gay flamingo strutted on the beach in all its glory, and the beautiful crown-crane stalked by its side; the mocking-bird, seated on trees hung with the resinous nests of the great black ant, made the forests re-echo with such exclamations of the voyagers as reached its acute ear, and, frequently from the same branch, the great howling monkey shrieked his dolorous song; every spray glittered with bright-plumaged choristers, and every hour presented new causes for wonder, till at length the sight became wearied, and the mind could marvel no more.

The

The scenery and objects continued the same for several days, at the expiration of which they descried San Fernando, embosomed in groves of the pirajao palm. Notwithstanding the many novelties that had served to beguile the tedium of the voyage, the Europeans were not sorry to quit the crowded flechera, though, even from afar, the miserable appearance of the town warned them not to expect a place like Angostura.

END OF VOL. II.

















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